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REMINISCENCES AND EVENTS

IN THE MINISTERIAL LIFE OF

REV. JOHN WESLEY DEVILBISS,

(DECEASED)

FORMERLY A MEMBER OF THE

WEST TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE,

BY

A NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS,

AND

The Compiler, Rev. H. A. Graves,

OF THE

WEST TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE,

Author of "Andrew Jackson Potter."

"The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance."—*Bible.*

GALVESTON:
W. A. SHAW & CO., STATIONERS AND PRINTERS,
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DEDICATION.

THIS LITTLE VOLUME
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
BY THE COMPILER,
TO THE WIDOW AND CHILDREN
OF THE MAN WHOSE LIFE IT BRIEFLY NARRATES,
AND
TO HIS SURVIVING BRETHREN
OF THE WEST TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

INTRODUCTION.

The holy example and meritorious virtues of good and useful men should be printed in books and handed down to coming ages, for their benign influence upon society even long after their subjects have passed away. Good books are the best companions for the young: print and put them in the rooms and parlors of the rising generation.

COMPILER.

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H. S. Thrall.

REMINISCENCES AND EVENTS

IN THE MINISTERIAL LIFE OF

Rev. John W. De Vilbiss.

(DECEASED.)

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND BOYHOOD.

By H. S. Thrall, D. D.

Rev. John Wesley DeVilbiss was born in 1819. His father's name was Alexander, and his mother's Priscilla. The Elder DeVilbiss was an exhorter and class leader in his native place, Graceham, Frederick County, Maryland. While Wesley, as he was usually called, was a mere child, the family joined in the great caravan then moving from the Atlantic board, over the Alleghanies, to swell the population of the Great West. Mr. DeVilbiss settled in Licking County, Ohio, which was then on the frontier. A village was subsequently laid out on his farm, which took from him the name of Alexandria. We have a picture of this household, fairly representing thousands of similar households in the Boundless West, as Ohio was then called. Living in a humble cottage built of logs; the family unaspiring, industrious, frugal, self reliant, thrifty and pious. The preacher who first visited this settlement was subsequently the pastor of this writer, at Athens, Ohio—Arza Brown, of precious memory. When about thirteen years of age young DeVilbiss, at Tiffin, Ohio, entered a saddler's shop to learn the trade. He worked side by side with a relative of his mother, who was then a faithful young working christian, and who soon afterwards entered the travel-

ing ministry, and is now (1885) a member of the Michigan Conference—Rev. Jno. A. Pitezer.

HIS CONVERSION.

Unquestionably divine truth and religious convictions often lie for a considerable time dormant. Even good seed may remain unaffected in the soil until some refreshing shower or genial sunlight warms them into life. Wesley DeVilbiss, probably, from his earliest childhood had a profound conviction of the truth and power of the gospel. The daily family devotions, the godly example of both his father and mother, and other kindred, left no doubt in his confiding mind of the genuineness of religion. In the summer of 1833 a camp meeting was held near Tiffin. This proved to be the refreshing time from the presence of the Lord, when the dormant faith of young Wesley was quickened into spiritual life, and he was powerfully converted to God. His first impulse was to invite sinners to Christ; an impulse, which it is safe to say, never deserted him. Judging from his treatment, while an apprentice, I think he served a pretty hard taskmaster. He told me he had no holidays, not even a part of the day on Christmas and the Fourth of July. The law compelled his employer to send him to school for a few weeks each year. But, is not the school of poverty and hardship the one in which men of true grit, and indomitable will, get their best training? His want of earlier schooling was supplied, in part, by the privilege of attending, for a period, the Methodist College, at Agusta, Kentucky, where the professors were Doctors Tominson, Bascom, Trimble and B. H. McCown; H. H. Kavanaugh, agent.

Mr. Pitezer says it was Professor McCown who suggested the change in the way of spelling and pronouncing the name—spelling with a large V and giving the accent to the second syllable. His father spelled it with a small v, accenting the first syllable. Brother Pitezer is mistaken.

In the minutes of the Ohio Conference the name was spelled in the usual way. The first time I heard it called in the new way was by T. O. Summers, secretary of the Texas Conference, in Brother DeVilbiss' absence; and the first time I ever saw it spelled with a large V was in the published appointments sent by Dr. Summers. It was such a manifest improvement that Brother DeVilbiss adopted it, and ever after so wrote his name. He remarked to me that the original name, probably German, was Devilbiser —Devilbiter.

DETERMINED TO ENTER THE MINISTRY.

After leaving college he again, for a time, worked at his trade in Mansfield, Ohio. In the fall of 1836, the Ohio Conference met in that town. His association with his cousin and shopmate revived his convictions that he ought to enter the itinerant ministry, and he began to make his arrangements to do so as soon as practicable.

Brother DeVilbiss and the writer lived for a time in adjoining townships in Ohio, and he was well acquainted with many of my relations, especially, with Dr. Spellman, a former classmate of my father, at the University of Vermont, for whom I was named; but I am not certain that we ever met until both had commenced preaching.

In March, 1840, I mounted my pony—called Dow for one of my classmates, Dow M'Cabe—at the campus of the Ohio University, and started for the Charleston circuit, in West Virginia, to which I had been appointed by the Presiding Elder, E. H. Field. In the summer of that year I attended a camp meeting, on the Little Kenawha river, near Parkersburg. Here I met Brother DeVilbiss. He had been licensed to preach, and was, I believe, traveling a circuit in company with one of the Ohio preachers, who was initiating him into the mysteries of an itinerant life. At the ensuing session of the Ohio Conference, at Urbana, we were both admitted into the traveling connection on trial. He

was appointed junior preacher on the Coolville circuit, with John W. Young, preacher in charge, and I, to the Little Kenawha circuit, Orville C. Shelton, preacher in charge. Only the Ohio river separated our charges, and we frequently met at quarterly and protracted meetings. Brother DeVilbiss was then earnest, zealous, fervent and able in prayer, and his labors were blessed. As a result of the year's work about two hundred increase was reported in the church membership.

At the Conference held in Urbana, September, 1841, Brother DeVilbiss was sent to the Belpre circuit, James B. Austin, preacher in charge; and I was appointed in charge of the Summerville circuit, with James W. Southard for an assistant. The latter charge included the counties of Nicholas, Fayette and part of Greenbriar. One of our appointments was at Mr. Black's, the father of the Rev. Sam Black, of the West Virginia Conference.

VOLUNTEERS FOR THE TEXAS MISSION.

During the period in which the Texas Mission was organized by Dr. Martin Ruter, I was a student at the Ohio University. The letters of the Doctor from Texas in the New York Advocate determined me to make Texas the field of my ministry, for which I was then studying. But brethren advised me to remain where I was until I was ordained Deacon. At the close of this year I was eligible to Deacon's orders, and before going to Hamilton, the place of meeting of the ensuing Conference, I visited Cincinnati, called on Bishop Morris, and he gave me an assurance that I should be sent a missionary to Texas. After those eligible to orders had passed their examination, (which then covered the two years' course, probationers not generally attending conference until they were ready to be received into full connection,) while I was sitting in the Conference room, the good Bishop passed me a paper, which on reading I found was my transfer to the Texas mission. After

this, Rev. Littleton Fowler, who had succeeded Dr. Ruter as superintendent of the work in Texas, appeared at the Conference and made an earnest appeal for volunteers for the Texas mission. A bench was set out before the Bishop, and volunteers invited to occupy it. I believe that one of the first to go up was the patriarch of the Conference, Jas. B. Finley, usually called the Old Chief. A younger brother, either O'Connor or DeVilbiss, went and crowded the Old Chief off, and finally some five or six were there. I, having my transfer in my pocket, kept my seat; but Bishop Morris announced that I was already transferred to the new republic.

AN INCIDENT.

Among those who arose to take that new fashioned mourner's bench, was Randolph S. Foster. When Foster got up to start, John Miley caught his coat-tail and pulled him back, saying, "Randolph, you have no business in Texas." Texas once enjoyed the labors of Abel Stevens, the great historian of Methodism. Thomas O. Summers, the corypheus of Southern Methodism; and came near having in her ministerial ranks the Bishop that preached that great sermon at the opening of the late Centennial Conference. Will a little digression be pardoned? When Bishop Foster arose to preach he apologised, saying he was not eloquent, and was a poor reader, but must read his sermon on the present occasion. Further expressing the universal regret felt, that both Bishops Pierce and Simpson, who had been expected to occupy the place he was so poorly fitted to fill; and he made some other remarks about the death of our great men and leaving none competent to take their places. Before he got through I was reminded of an expression of an outspoken woman when Dr. Newton was preaching the funeral sermon of Dr. Bunting. Newton said the Lord was taking the fathers and leaving none to supply their places. The good woman spoke out in meeting

and astonished the speaker by exclaiming, "thank God, that's a lie." Pretty rough, but still consoling.

PREPARATION FOR THE TRIP.

It was not safe to descend the river immediately after the adjournment of the Conference to New Orleans, as the yellow fever was raging in that city. I remained in Cincinnati, staying alternately with the venerable Dr. Charles Elliott and Rev. James P. Kilbreath, then of the Western Book Concern. Soon after the adjournment of the Conference, Brother Daniel Poe published a notice in the Western Christian Advocate that the missionaries to Texas would rendezvous at Cincinnati and start together for their distant field of labor. Brother Poe was not one of the original volunteers, but he arose in the Conference room and stated that he had been in Texas to see about the business of a deceased brother, Major G. W. Poe, of the Texas Army. Some one suggested that Brother Poe go and take charge of the boys. He readily agreed to do so. He was asked if his wife would consent? He said the first time he saw her she was a missionary teaching in an Indian wigwam near the head of Lake Superior. Of course she would go.

The yellow fever abated before the time fixed by Brother Poe to start, and I engaged passage on the first fine packet that left Cincinnati for New Orleans. Thinking the matter over, I concluded it would be better to go in advance; so large a company might find it difficult to obtain transportation after leaving navigable waters; at any rate I thought I could make my way to Texas by myself. When we reached New Orleans it was reported that Galveston was blockaded by a Mexican fleet.

ONE OF THE MISSIONARIES REACHES GALVESTON.

Two new steamers had just been put on the line between Texas and New Orleans, the best that the famous Morgan Line had then sent out. The "Neptune," Captain Rollins:

and the "New York," Captain Wright. The "Neptune" was advertised to leave in a few days for Galveston. It was said she was faster than any of the Mexican blockading fleet, and could either run into the harbor or return to the mouth of the Mississippi river. I took passage on this good ship and we arrived safely in Galveston harbor, without sighting a Mexican cruiser. At Galveston I preached on Sunday night in the house of Judge John B. Jones on Market street, and on Tuesday night in the new Ryland Chapel, and formed an agreeable acquaintance with Judge Jones' family and the families of Bros. Price, Rice, Wood, Briggs, etc., and especially with Judge Watrous. For these brethren I cherished a life-long friendship.

At Houston I met Judge Charles Shearn, and others. It was expected that Bishop Roberts would have arrived on the Neptune. He was holding the Arkansas Conference as I passed Helena, and expected to come immediately to Galveston, but he was taken sick, and returned to his Indiana home and soon afterward died. Brother David Ayres had brought a carriage to Houston to take the Bishop to the ensuing Conference at Bastrop. I took a seat in his carriage and traveled to the Wade neighborhood on the Brazos, where Pittsville now stands.

HIS FIRST TEXAS CIRCUIT.

I arrived at Brother Wade's, on the first of December and remained there a week, assisting Brother Robert Alexander at a quarterly meeting. The class there numbered over fifty members, and had been organized during the year. For want of money they paid the Presiding Elder in cattle; the stewards agreeing to send them up to his rancho in Austin county. I reached Washington on the seventeenth, where the Texas Congress was then in session; arrived at Bastrop, the seat of the Conference, on the twenty-first. Here I met Brothers Fowler and Poe, and I learned that the other brethren from Ohio would not be at

the Conference, having entered Texas by the way of Red river. The reasons are given in Brother DeVilbiss' reminiscences. Bishop Roberts not being present, R. Alexander was elected president, and T. O. Summers, secretary.

Brother DeVilbiss was sent to the Egypt circuit, which embraced all the Colorado valley below Cummings' creek, and the valleys of the Lavaca and Navidad rivers. Henderson D. Palmer was in charge of the circuit. It is unnecessary to notice, at large, his work this year, as he has given it in his reminiscences. I was sent to the Brazoria circuit, with Jesse Hord in the same field, as missionary to the negroes This was the first year I had been without a colleague; but Brother Hord and myself worked together, and I hardly felt the loss. At that period the Methodist preachers were sent out as Christ sent out his disciples—two and two to assist each other in work. I am doubtful if that would not be a good plan now.

TOO MUCH WATER.

It may interest the present race of itinerants a little to relate some incidents of that early day. The Conference at Bastrop adjourned about twelve o'clock, December 27, and a number of the preachers started down the river, staying all night at Hill's Prairie. During the night a heavy rain fell. The next afternoon, arriving at Rabb's Creek, it was found very high. We improvised a raft, upon which myself and some others tried to cross, but were glad, after a ducking, to gain the shore on the same side from which we started. The venerable Frank Wilson plunged into the stream on his horse and disappeared, being submerged in the swollen stream; finally, however, horse and rider rose to the surface, his head bleeding from a bruise. He swam ashore and the horse followed him. Daniel Poe next ventured in, and made the opposite bank, having lost his saddle and his clothes which he had tied to the saddle. It was nearly night; the air was chilly, and those brethren

wet; and Poe with nothing on but his underclothing, without a saddle, had to ride nine miles to Ruterville. The other brethren, seeing the sad plight of those who had ventured into the creek, determined to wait until morning. J. H. Collard and myself rode back to Mr. Miller's, a few miles, and Brothers Fisher, Fowler, Hord, Lewis, Palmer, Sneed, Shook, and Johnson camped in a small vacant cabin on the bank of the creek. Brother Hord rode to a plantation and procured a bag of sweet potatatoes, which were baked for supper. A prayer meeting followed, and the brethren slept as best they could until daylight.

THE EGYPT CAMP MEETING.

In the spring I was urgently solicited to attend a camp meeting at the Spanish Springs Camp Ground on Brother DeVilbiss' circuit. In crossing the prairie from the Brazos to the Colorado River, I saw the first bunch of mustangs. Deer were as plentiful as cattle on the prairies. I copy from my private journal under date May 26, 1843: "Arrived on the camp ground six miles below Egypt on the Colorado, and was much disappointed to learn that the meeting was postponed on account of the incessant rains. I had ridden a great distance, and swam five times to reach it." At Egypt Brother DeVilbiss and myself met for the first time in Texas, and had a most delightful interview. Then and there I formed the acquaintance of some of the best men and best friends I have met in life: Captain Heard, Judge Menifee, Colonel Hodges, Dr. Sutherland, father of Rev. A. H. Sutherland; Tom Read, the Mercers, etc., etc. The Egypt society had been organized by Dr. Ruter, and was composed of as good material as any in Texas.

The meeting had been postponed until June. Again I copy from my journal: "June 15, Thursday: Arrived on the camp ground, near Egypt, about ten o'clock. The ground is situated on a prairie near a beautiful spring.

There are eight spacious tents on the ground and an arbor to preach under sufficiently large to seat five hundred people. The preachers present are, John Clark, P. E.; J. W. Whipple, John Haynie, J. W. DeVilbiss, and F. E. Foster, Cumberland Presbyterian."

PEERLESS PREACHERS.

This meeting closed on the nineteenth. My journal states, that "the most perfect order prevailed; and between forty and fifty were converted, and twenty joined the church." At the close of the meeting, Brothers Haynie and DeVilbiss were down with fever.

The year 1843 was one of the wettest I have seen in Texas. The Brazos was overflowed three times. Both the Brazoria and the Egypt circuits were in the low, flat country, and I scarcely made a round on my circuit that I did not have to swim swollen streams. Early in October, I attended a camp meeting on Walker's creek, in Grimes county. While on the ground, after preaching one night, the wind and rain beating on my head, I was taken with a severe chill, and this was followed by high fever. There I again met Alexander, Carl, Sullivan, Johnson, and other ministerial brethren. After I was able to travel I spent a week in the family of my dear friend, Orceneth Fisher, at Gay Hill.

October 10, 1843, I was at the Cedar Creek camp meeting, on Brother Fisher's work. This was a famous camp ground, two miles north of Chappell Hill. There were eleven preachers present: and such preachers: Alexander, Clark, Fisher, Richardson, Kinney, Whipple, DeVilbiss! There were pulpit giants in those days.

I had expected Brother Fisher, with Brother Clark, to our last quarterly meeting for the year, at Brazoria. To assist in entertaining the meeting, Maj. James P. Caldwell moved into the town. Owing to the high waters, the Elder failed to reach us, and even Brother Hord, who lived

only a few miles from the town, was not present, being detained by sickness. I was alone; but we had an excellent meeting. A goodly number united with the church, and I felt greatly encouraged. At that time I made appointments for four two days' meetings, before going to conference. All were more or less successful, though the weather was unpropitious.

ON THE WAY TO CONFERENCE.

Conference was to convene in Walker county, near Huntsville. Every one acquainted with the route dissuaded me from trying to make the trip. I, however, started. My journal states that, "in getting ninety miles I had to travel two hundred, swimming numerous creeks, and traversing boggy prairies without a road." The extra travel was to head impassable streams. Worn, and wearied, and thoroughly soaked with water, I was journeying along on a high prairie, east of Washington, still doubtful if I should make the trip, when I saw, in the distance, three horsemen, journeying toward the road I was traveling. Was ever poor fellow gladder to see friends than was I when I discovered that the three horsemen were Brothers Fisher, DeVilbiss and Whipple? We were now on high ground, the rains had ceased, the creeks fallen, and we had no further trouble in reaching the seat of the Conference. Bishop Andrew was there, having been pilotted thither by T. O. Summers, from Houston. They did some tall wading, some paddling, and, in some instances, swam their horses: but they were there.

There were no telegraphs in those days, and news traveled tardily. We had not heard, until we reached the seat of the Conference, that our good friend, Daniel Poe, was dead. He and his heroic wife died, I believe, on the same day, and were buried in the same grave. O'Connor had died the year before, and of the six preachers transferred from Ohio two years previously, only Brother DeVilbiss

and myself received appointments at this Conference. The others had either ceased to travel, or gone back to their old Conference. I was sent to the Egypt circuit, with W. S. Hamilton for a colleague; and Brother DeVilbiss to Gonzales, which included all west Texas above the town and west of the Guadalupe river.

COONING ACROSS A CREEK.

It was on our way westward from this Conference that the incident occurred described in his reminiscences, in which we cooned it across Mill creek. I copy from my journal of December 21, 1843: "We had more trouble in crossing Mill creek than I ever had before in Texas. Brother DeVilbiss' horse came very near drowning before he could be rescued. It was with great difficulty and some peril that we succeeded in getting our things across the creek." But that was not the only difficulty we experienced that day. The San Bernard was much wider than Mill creek, but said not to be swimming. However, there was danger of quicksand in the stream. Sure enough, Brother DeVilbiss' horse bogged; his saddlebags were swept into the current and he was compelled to jump into the stream to recover them. I fared better, as my careful pony crossed without sinking in the quicksand. At the close of this day, I find some grateful expressions in my journal: "That, between wading and rafting and swimming, we have been able to get along. * * * A more persevering and energetic body of men can scarcely be found than the noble band composing the Texas Annual Conference."

A CAMP MEETING DROWNED OUT.

Our works were sufficiently near for us to occasionally meet during the year 1844. In his reminiscences he mentions a camp meeting near the present town of Cuero, the first ever held on the Gaudalupe river. Brother Hamilton and myself were in attendance. We were also at another

meeting at the Spanish Springs camp ground, where we had a blessed time; and met again, for a camp meeting on the Navidad river, a few miles above Texana. Brothers Richardson, Hord, Hamilton and, I believe, Father Haynie were there; but the meeting was interrupted by excessive rains. In going to that meeting I had to swim the Colorado at Dr. Sutherland's; had worked to clear up the ground and prepare seats and a stand; had rode up and down both sides of the Navidad and Lavaca rivers inviting every family for many miles to the meeting. We expected to begin Thursday night. I went that day to Brother R. H. Hill's to dinner; a rain set in, and it continued until the whole bottom was under water.

A DESERTED PLANTATION.

We had preaching on Sunday in the dining room of Brother Thomas Menifee's house. How many memories crowd upon me as I write that name; his house was then the abode of a generous family, of unbounded hospitality. All the older members of that large family connection have already gone, and the younger ones are becoming sprinkled with age. The last time I passed the place the walls of the old brick house looked bare; the doors were creaking in the wind; the sugar house had disappeared; most of the plantation had been thrown out, and the beautiful hedge, though still living, was in a neglected condition. The most of those who there held sweet communion have departed, never more to meet us here.

Fixed in eternal state,
They have done with all below,
We a little longer wait,
But how little—none can know.

At the close of 1844, the Conference met in San Augustine. January 8, 1845, in going from Egypt to this Conference, at Chappell Hill, or rather in that neighborhood, as the village was not laid out until a later period, we fell in with Brothers Alexander and Richardson and their wives,

also on their way to San Augustine. We traveled from thirty-five to forty miles each day, the good ladies enduring the fatigue of horseback riding as well and as cheerfully as the brethren. It would be difficult to induce any ladies of the present generation to undertake such a journey with such roads, and with such accommodations.

ORDAINED ELDER.

At Hamilton, Ohio, in 1842, Brother DeVilbiss and I had stood side by side and were ordained Deacons. At San Augustine we knelt side by side and were ordained Elders, by Bishop Janes. This was the last session of the old Texas Conference, provision having been made for a division, and the next year the East Texas Conference met separately. There were then 4,970 church members, and forty-one traveling and fifty-five local preachers.

He was returned to the Gonzales circuit, and I was read out to the Bastrop circuit. I say I was read out to the Bastrop work, and was making preparations for prosecuting the work, when the Presiding Elder, Brother Richardson, changed me to the Ruterville circuit, and also placed me in charge of the Ruterville College. I thus had double work. In Brother DeVilbiss' reminiscences he tells of his visit to San Antonio this year, and gives other particulars of his labors. As for myself, I entered upon the new year and business immediately. I opened the school with eight pupils. At the opening of the second session I needed an assistant, and Charles Wright, a graduate of Yale College, came to my assistance. We closed with over fifty scholars. Professor Wright continued in the school for a season, but finally devoted himself to his favorite pursuit of Botany, and was with Major Emory when he surveyed the boundary line between the United States and Mexico. He was also the Botanist in the United States expedition to the Chinese seas and Japan. He still lives at his native village of Weathersfield, Connecticut.

MANNING THE OUTPOSTS.

The sixth session of the Texas Conference met in Houston, Bishop Soule, President, and Chauncey Richardson, Secretary. Dr. Summers had left Texas. Brother DeVilbiss was sent to San Antonio, I was sent to Austin, and John Haynie to Corpus Christi. These appointments indicated that Bishop Soule intended to man the outposts, all these points being on the extreme frontier. Indians infested this whole frontier. Mr. Haynie at Goliad procured an escort of soldiers to accompany him to his field of labor. When there he found it difficult to procure a preaching place or a place to sleep. He finally opened his mission in a theatre in the morning, while a performance took place at the same place at night. His first lodging place was a warehouse, on some sacks of corn. Mr. Thrall fared little better at Austin, having to sleep for weeks on a blanket in a lawyer's office. Brother DeVilbiss' reminiscenses inform the reader how he gained a foothold in San Antonio. I visited him during the period of his pastorate and found him teaching both a day and Sunday school in a Mexican hacal, built by setting up mesquite posts in the ground, stopping the cracks with mud, and covered with a thatch roof and with a dirt floor. Both Brother DeVilbiss and myself remained two years in our respective charges. At Austin we erected a small church building, which was left out of debt at the close of the second year.

ON THE RUTERVILLE CIRCUIT.

In 1848 and 1849, I was on the Washington circuit, territory in which there are, now, half a dozen different charges. In 1848 Brother DeVilbiss was on the Ruterville circuit, which then included LaGrange and nearly all Fayette county. During the year we met occasionally, especially at the Ruterville camp meeting. This was then a great rallying point for preachers and people. It was at this camp meeting that preliminary steps were taken for

the establishment of the TEXAS CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE. He had erected a small house near the residence of Judge Menifee, and expected to be continued on the circuit; but he was sent, at the ensuing Conference, to the Ben Franklin circuit, on the Brazos. It was a long, difficult move, and he thought it something of a hardship, but told me afterward that it was one of the happiest and most successful years of his ministry. The next year he was at Nashville, still on what was then the upper Brazos.

PADDLING THEIR OWN CANOES.

At the close of this year, a number of preachers started westward to the Conference, which was to convene at Seguin, December 6, 1849. A number staid, the Sunday before Conference, in the neighborhood of Judge Menifee's, now Flatonia. During night a heavy rain fell, and when we reached the neighborhood of Peach creek, we were informed that it was impassable. At Mr. Brockius' house there were a good many detained travelers, who assured us it was useless to drive down to the creek. I remarked to Brother DeVilbiss that we were under obligations to go on until further progress was impossible. He had his family in a carriage. Brother W. S. Hamilton also had his wife and a young lady in a carriage. There were, in the company, a number of preachers on horseback, among them, Brother J. H. Shapard, now of Columbia. We found two small troughs, probably used to feed hogs or horses. These were tied together securely; then a rope was stretched across the river. The females were placed in these troughs and floated over. Then the beds were removed from the carriages and floated over. In like manner the wheels were placed on board and carried across. Last of all, the horses swam over. While the brethren were at this, the good ladies had made a pot of coffee and prepared our lunch. Just as we had taken our dinner, and put our carriages together, and were ready to start, a crowd of people

came down from Mr. Brockius' to see what detained us. Seeing us across the swollen stream, they raised their hands in perfect astonishment. One sharp gentleman, I believe, a lawyer, suggested that we ought to take a mail contract. Late that night we reached Gonzales, and our arrival there was a surprise, as the mail had failed to make the trip. At the Seguin Conference, I was sent to Galveston, and Brother DeVilbiss again to Nashville. We were far apart, and but for an untoward circumstance, should hardly have met during the ensuing year. He had received so meager a support that he felt it his imperative duty to go to work again at his trade. He visited Houston and Galveston, where friends furnished him with means to set up a saddlery shop. In connection with his ministerial duties he continued for sevearl years to carry on this business. In the fall of 1855 I was appointed presiding elder of the Ruterville district, in which Caldwell was located. He made me a saddle and saddle-bags; for nearly thirty years this saddle has been in use, and now I would be loth to exchange it for an ordinary new one. It is one of the old Hope trees, the best and easiest style of saddle ever manufactured.

After the formation of the West Texas Conference in 1858, we were not, for a number of years, often together, as I remained most of the time in the Texas Conference.

Nine years ago I was transferred to the West, and since that time we have been often together. During the two last years of his life I was again his presiding elder. Thus our ministerial life, beginning together forty-five years ago, continued in close and delightful fellowship until death separated us. Other pens will note more fully the various incidents of his long, laborious and successful life. This brief sketch of our ministerial and christian association is contributed in the hope that it will stimulate our younger brethren to imitate his noble example.

[The following prayer was made at Austin, Texas, at the laying of the corner stone of the new Capitol of the State in the audience, it is supposed, of thirty thousand people, March, 1885. Rev. H. S. Thrall was chosen by a committee to offer the dedicatory prayer. It is inserted in connection with his chapter in this book because it is deemed that it merits preservation, and because it will show the ability and popular standing of the missionary comrade of our departed brother. In youthful life they came as young missionaries to the Republic of Texas. The author of the prayer still lives, but is approaching the eternal spheres, but ripe and ready for the immortal state.—COMPILER.]

Captain W. C. Walsh, chairman of the committee of arrangements, introduced Rev. Homer S. Thrall, the historian who made the following prayer:

"Almighty and Immortal God! We have met here to lay the corner stone of this great public edifice, and we humbly implore Thy blessing upon our undertaking. We look to Thee, recognizing and realizing our own helplessness. 'Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.' This house, beautiful for situation, crowning the hill which overlooks our Capital city, is to be of exceeding magnificence. May it stand for generations and centuries, a center of wholesome political influence and power. Here our governor and heads of departments will have their offices; here will be held our higher courts; here will assemble the chosen representatives of our people to make our laws. This structure has been commenced under favorable auspices, and we pray Thy blessing upon its continuance. Bless those who prepare the stones in the quarries, and those who place them in the walls, those who plan and those who labor. May no untoward circumstance, such as war, pestilence or famine, interrupt the progress of this work, and in due time may it stand here completed, finished in all its details and ready for use. And now, O our God, we trust we are humbly thankful for past mercies and present blessings; for the peace and plenty which crown the land; for the possession of civil and religious liberty; for the means of mental and moral culture; for all the blessings which our Christian civilization brings us.

We pray, that as a people, we may continue to enjoy these evidences of Thy providential care over us. May fruitful seasons reward the labor of the husbandman! May our cattle and our domestic animals upon our thousand hills and boundless plains multiply! May we have commercial prosperity! May our population and wealth continue to increase and we prove ourselves worthy of the blessings of a benign providence!

"Bless our universities; our normal institutes, colleges, and free schools, and our asylums for the unfortunates of our race! May all who teach the youth in the school room or through the press be inspired with lofty sentiments of virtue and honor; and may our youth be instructed and trained, that each succeeding generation shall advance in wisdom and knowledge!

"We pray Thy blessing upon the population of the United States! May our people be law abiding and God fearing! May we be exempted from exciting questions that now threaten the very existence of the governments of the old world!

"We especially invoke Thy heavenly benedictions upon the outgoing and incoming presidents of the United States! May the life of him who is soon to assume the high trust confided to him by fifty millions of people be shielded from the bullet or dagger of the assassin! And may he be permitted through his allotted term of office to enjoy Thy divine protection and guidance! And may this great people prosper under his administration! And we commend to Thy providential care the officers of our own State, executive, judicial and legislative; and all our people, in their various callings and professions. In Thy sight, O, Lord, the nations of the earth are but as a drop in the ocean: in Thy hands are the reins of universal dominion, and we pray that the clash of arms and the conflict of armies in the dark continent and in the distant east may result in human progress. May the inalienable rights of humanity be secured by these

wars, and thus may all people and languages and nations, of all climes and countries, be brought into the enjoyment of civil liberty, and under the elevating and refining influence of an advanced civilization!

"And now, Lord, when this work is done, and this building stands completed from base to dome, from foundation stone to finial, and we behold it in its perfected beauty and grandeur, a sublime specimen of human skill and energy, then may our eyes and hearts turn from this to the wonderful works of the Great Architect, as exhibited in the material universe, and thus may we learn how insignificant are the mightiest of human achievements, and then may we seek through the mercy of God to be fit for a happy entrance and final abode in that 'temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' And to the only wise God and our Saviour will we ascribe glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and forever. Amen."

CHAPTER II.

No. 1.

REMINISCENCES OF A SUPERANNUATED PREACHER.

By John Wesley DeVilbiss, Sr.

[The reminiscences following were contributed by Brother DeVilbiss in a series of articles to the Texas Christian Advocate, and are here reproduced as being more appropriate, interesting and instructive than anything which could be written in their stead.—Compiler.]

At the earnest solicitation of many of my brethren of the West Texas Conference, among them Reverends Thrall, Thornberry, Sutherland, O. A. Fisher, and others, I begin some brief recollections of my connection with Texas Methodism and my labors in this broad field, hoping thus to be of some use in my declining years to the church, and of doing something that may encourage my dear brethren who are now in the active work of the ministry.

These reminiscences have been delayed beyond my own expectations and the expectations of my brethren for two or three reasons: First, my very bad health during the winter has precluded me from doing much labor of any kind. Second, learning the crowded state of the Advocate, I concluded to wait till you had less material on hand, and would be better able to give place to these recollections of past labor in God's vineyard, if you should deem them worthy of any place in your excellent journal. Third, as you are now engaged, no doubt, with the Jubilee Advocate, and your publishers have their hands full, I thought it would be best for me to wait till you are through with that important publication. As health permits, I propose now to give you these brief sketches, and will begin with my

TRIP TO TEXAS IN 1842.

The Ohio Conference was held this year at Hamilton, Butler county, Ohio, closing Obtober 4. I, with five others,

volunteered to transfer to Texas as missionaries. I find my transfer among my credentials in Bishop Morris' handwriting, dated October 4, 1842. I immediately made the necessary preparations and set out for my destination. I took steamer at Marietta, Ohio, and went to Cincinnati. There we tarried several days, awaiting a light-draught steamer, as the water was very low. About November 20, we went aboard the Narragansett, a goodly craft, and were soon off for Texas. Our company consisted of Rev. Daniel Poe and wife, Rev. Wm. O'Connor and wife, and Revs. Wilbur J. Thurber and Richard Walker, all of the Ohio Conference, and Rev. Isaac M. Williams, of North Ohio Conference. We had also in our company, Rev. Littleton Fowler and wife, General Chambers and Major Reiley, all citizens of Texas. Of that company all have passed away from earth except Mrs. Fowler (now Mrs. Woollam), and perhaps Mrs. O'Connor, who, if living, is now Mrs. Hatch, and the writer. Rev. H. S. Thrall, who was also among the Ohio Conference transfers, preceded us some weeks. He is still on the effective list and able to do full ministerial work, besides an immense amount of literary labor. He is the Presiding Elder on San Antonio district, and beloved by all.

But one incident of note occurred on the trip, except an occasional stick on a sand bar, till we arrived at New Orleans. This incident was a shooting match. Just below the mouth of the Ohio river our steamer stopped to wood from some flat boats, which were moored alongside a beautiful sand bar, or beach. On this beach was lying a large cottonwood tree, entirely clear of bark. Brother Poe brought out his long rifle, which had been made to order, and which in its whole length was just equal to the height of the owner, six feet six and a half inches. A round piece of paper, with a black spot in it, was pinned to the horizontal trunk of the tree for a mark. Brother Poe took the first shot, and cut a small nick in the paper. Brother

Fowler missed the mark altogether; so did two or three others. The unwieldy piece was then handed to the writer, and, by accident or somehow else, out went the black spot and down went the paper, and immediately the steamer's bell rang for starting. I rather enjoyed the adulations of the passengers. "That boy will do for Texas!" "Why, he beat the owner of the gun!" I should have hesitated to have ventured another shot.

At New Orleans the captain and his chief clerk tried to sell out the green Ohio boy by an effort to get him to a masquerade ball. They might have succeeded, but fortunately Gen. Chambers overheard their plans and promptly notified me, and thus saved me, no doubt, much mortification and perhaps other trouble. Here, also, a Jew merchant sold me a good overcoat, wrapped it up, and, in breaking the thread, essayed to drop it behind the counter, and handed me another all done up, worth about half as much. I had no little trouble to get the coat I had bought.

It was reported at New Orleans that Galveston was blockaded by a Mexican squadron. This report (which afterwards proved to be false) influenced us to take the steamer for Red River. We had a tedious trip; were two days getting over the falls at Alexandria, La., and after much delay arrived at Grand Ecore, not being able to get to Natchitoches on account of low water. At Grand Ecore we hired a wagon and team to haul our baggage and our ladies, and the men went afoot. Here I had my first experience in camping out. It was pleasant weather, and we all enjoyed the occasion in the pine woods. The next night we spent at a new house, in the western part of Louisiana. For the first time I saw a house without an upper floor in it. It looked strange and ghostly to me, and when Brother Fowler remarked that "this is a good sample of our Texas houses," I was rather shocked. I inquired how they did when it snowed. "Ah," said Brother Fowler, "that seldom happens in this country." The next day we we were to

cross the Sabine river into Texas. It was the tenth day of December, 1842. I was advised not to drink any water from the Sabine, as it gave a person an inclination to steal something as soon as they got into Texas. I walked to the front end of the boat; our wagon followed, and then the balance of our company, so that I was the first one of the Ohio folks to tread on Texas soil. We drove and walked about ten or twelve miles to a Brother Brown's, who had a large plantation and was well to do. Never were a lot of weary travelers more pleasantly taken in and cared for than were we by good Brother and Sister Brown.

Brother Fowler remarked to me, "Brother DeVilbiss, this is a fair specimen of Texas hospitality." I found it so in hundreds of instances since that time.

PALO BLANCO RANCH, May 3, 1884.

No. 2.

REMINISCENCES OF A SUPERANNUATED PREACHER.

I took leave of my readers at Brother Brown's, ten miles West of Sabine river. Our company held a council, and it was concluded, for want of horses, that it was best for only a part to go to Conference, at Bastrop, which was appointed for December 22d. The others remained in the vicinity of Brother Brown's—myself among them. As it would require three or four weeks for the Brethren to go to Conference and return, we resolved to hold several protracted meetings. At one of these we had a number of bright conversions. One was a young Frenchman who understood very little of the English language. He became deeply interested for his salvation; came to the mourners' bench, and after a severe struggle, found peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It was amusing to hear his expressions of joy in broken English. I have never witnessed a clearer conversion. This man came to Central Texas,

settled in a thriving county seat, went to merchandising, succeeded in business, married, raised a large family, and some two years ago died an honored citizen and a faithful member of the Presbyterian Church.

I became very much attached to these good people in Eastern Texas, and had great hopes that I might receive an appointment among them. In this, however, I was disappointed. When the brethren returned from Conference I was informed that I was junior preacher on Egypt circuit, with Henderson D. Palmer in charge and John Clark presiding elder. I was now three hundred miles from my field of labor, and how to get there I did not know. Providence opened my way. Brother Sneed had bought a bunch of horses, and wished them taken to Washington county, on the Brazos, and offered me one to ride provided I would assist in getting the others across the country. Mr. Editor, could you have seen Brother Palmer and myself on this trip, you would not have taken us for Methodist preachers! Each had two horses tailed to the one he rode, and a few more followed of their own accord. We had a pleasant trip, and in due time delivered the stock safely to the owner, who had preceded us a week or ten days. Brother Sneed loaned me a horse to ride to my circuit, and keep till I could procure one of my own.

The nearest point to our circuit was about thirty-five miles, which we made in a day. We were now on the Colorado, two miles from Columbus, our initial appointment. We put up at a Mr. Wright's, and were informed that the Colorado was higher than ever known by the oldest citizen. Columbus was on the west side of the river, and the following Sabbath was the day for preaching. It was Friday night, and we saw no way of crossing the river unless we could construct a raft. Mr. Wright informed me that Mr. Beason had some dry willow house logs, which lay very near the water, and at a good place to launch a raft. In the morning, early, I went to see Mr. Beason, and without any

difficulty got the logs. Armed with auger, saw, axe, hammer and nails, Brother Palmer and I went to work, and by 3 p. m. our raft was finished and launched, and appeared to me to be entirely seaworthy, though Brother Palmer and the by-standers thought otherwise. We would have to run down the river about two miles to make Columbus, and these gentlemen thought the eddies and flood-wood together would cause our raft to founder. Just as we were making our preparations to go aboard, a messenger arrived, informing us that a Mr. Williams had been drowned that morning in attempting to cross a slough, and requesting Brother Palmer and myself to make a coffin for him. I confess this news rather dampened my confidence in the raft, and we abandoned the enterprise. We gathered some rough tools, found some rough planks, and by 12 m. on Sunday finished the coffin. We buried our young friend, and that night I preached to a small congregation at Mr. Wright's, and Brother Palmer delivered a warm and appropriate exhortation. Monday we set out for Egypt, which could be reached without crossing the river; and after a hard day's ride, through mud and water, arrived at Mr. Eli Mercer's and put up for the night. Mr. Mercer and family were Baptists, of the true Christian type. We were cordially received and hospitably entertained. The plan of our circuit was a very meager document, and did not designate any houses or stopping places for the circuit-riders, as they were called. Here we found a noble set of people, and well-to-do in worldly matters. The neighborhood was fitly named Egypt, for there was always an abundance of corn raised there, which was hauled a long distance to supply the new settlements further west. Here we concluded to make our home, and began our work. The circuit embraced all the settlements in what is now Colorado, Lavaca, Jackson, Wharton and Matagorda counties. We had sixteen appointments, and it required nearly four hundred miles of travel to get round the circuit, which we accom-

plished in four weeks. During about three months of this year we had to travel at night, on account of the green-headed flies. If we attempted to cross the prairies in daylight, we did it at the risk of losing our horses. Brother Lancaster, in his reminiscences, says: "There appeared a small horse-fly, with a green head, and they were so numerous that a man could scarcely cross the prairie in day time. It was common for a horse to drop and roll, then rise and run, and leave the rider to trudge his way on foot." I have heard of several instances where the horse made for the timber, but dropped dead before reaching it. Then the mosquitoes—so large and so numerous! They could easily penetrate a buckskin glove. Notwithstanding these annoyances, we had a gracious visitation of divine mercy. We received from the people nothing but kindness and hospitality. At our first quarterly meeting we had a gracious outpouring of the Spirit. Among the converts were two daughters of that good man, Colonel Hodges, whom most of our old preachers knew. He was one of the noblest and best men of earth. His oldest daughter, familiarly called Puss, subsequently married Mr. Thomas Sutherland, raised a large family, and died a few years ago triumphantly in the faith of the gospel. The younger, called Duck, married Mr. Bell, at Goliad. She has a large family, I think, of fourteen or fifteen living children, and still lives an ornament to the church of God. We had a gracious work of grace among the colored people. Many of them were happily converted to God, and united with the church. Slaves though these people were, they appeared to be happy. They were well fed, well clothed, and had ample time and opportunity to worship God.

Brother Palmer left the circuit, after making part of one round, to attend to some business in Eastern Texas. He did not return for over six months, so that I was left alone in this large field of labor. I think this was understood by the powers that were in authority, and hence his appoint-

ment was merely nominal. He was a good man and true, and full of faith and the Holy Ghost. We had a camp meeting this year at Spanish Camp Springs, on Peach creek, six miles below Egypt. The preachers present on that occasion were John Clark, Presiding Elder; Chauncy Richardson, John W. Kenny, John Haynie, Homer S. Thrall, Wm. S. Hamilton, Isaac M. Williams and the writer. Brother Thrall and myself are all who are living of that company. This meeting resulted in a few conversions among the whites, a large number among the blacks, and was a great blessing to the church.

Some incidents occurred this year, which, perhaps, are worth relating. I had a week-day appointment at a private house on Old Caney. The first time I preached there, while the people were gathering, a pious old lady ventured to give us a voluntary hymn. She sang it to the tune of "Old Windham," in rather slow time, with a peculiar nasal twang. The hymn went on this wise:

"A Methodist it is in my name,
I hope to live and die the same,
And when I die I'll go to rest,
And live among the Methodist.

"The devil hates the Methodist,
Because they sing and shout the best," etc.

At the close of the service I told the good sister that I did not like her hymn. "You don't?" said she with emphasis: "Why, I think it is the best hymn in the book." I told her it was not in the book. Said she: "Yes, sir-ree, but it is:" and she drew from her pocket an old, rusty, little book and showed me the hymn. So I had to give it up.

A NORTHER.

On the 16th day of March of this year I left the town of Matagorda, in company with an old Texan by the name of Beaty, after an early breakfast. The morning was beautiful, a delightful breeze was blowing from the south, all nature was clothed in green, and the grass waved like a field of wheat. The prairie had been burned off during the

winter, and the beautiful, tender grass was about eight inches high. We proceeded up the prairie for about twelve miles to Mr. Bruce's, and stopped a few moments for a drink of water. Mr. Bruce said he thought we should have a severe norther soon, as it had been so very warm. This was strange talk to me. After we had proceeded about half a mile I began to admire the grandeur of the clouds, as they were looming up from the north. "Ah!" said Mr. Beaty, "that is a regular-built wet and freezing norther, and we had better turn back to Mr. Bruce's." "Oh," said I, "we can certainly get to Mr. Williams'. It is only four miles." "No, we can't," said Mr. B.; and at that he turned his horse, and the norther, with a dash of rain, struck us. It was so sudden it was like dropping out of a warm atmosphere into cold water. I had great difficulty in getting on my overcoat. We had not been at Mr. Bruce's over half an hour before the water that had fallen was frozen. Here we were taken in and kindly cared for. Our only chance for fire was an old cooking stove, wich had also to be used by the family for cooking the meals. We spent the night, and felt very thankful to the family for their kindness. In the morning the norther had assuaged, and we went on our way rejoicing. At Peach creek I found the corpse of a man who had frozen to death in the storm, and helped to bury him. I learned of two others who had perished in the same norther. I was taught a lesson from this norther, and on the strength of it I formed a resolution, which I have scrupulously observed ever since. From September 20th until March 20th I never go any distance without sufficient clothing for freezing weather.

During this year Brother Thrall and myself met at a camp-meeting in Washington county, near where Chappell Hill now stands. He was then on the Brazoria circuit. At the close of this meeting we started for Egypt. We spent the first night at Rev. Robert Alexander's. Here we were told that Mill creek, some eight miles on the way, was impass-

able. Brother Thrall said we would go and see. On the way we met a colored man, who told us that about 300 yards below the ford some person had cut a small tree across the stream: and, said the darkey, "if you is good at cooning you'll get over." We went and found the tree, which looked like a slim chance. Bro. Thrall said we would try it. I tied his saddle and saddle bags on his back, and he cooned it safely over the stream. He then returned and fixed me up in like manner, and I made the trip safely. The next thing was to get the horses over. There was a bluff about ten feet high on the north side of the creek, while on the south side the bank was low. We concluded to lead our horses, one at a time, near this bluff, and push them off into the water. Brother Thrall then led Fox (my horse) up to the bluff, gave him a push, and in he went. He floundered considerably, and for a few moments I thought my horse was gone; but he finally made the shore all right. Brother Thrall then led up Brazos, as he called him. He was a strong, well built pony, but he had no hair on his head and face. He looked in his face for all the world like an alligator. Brother Thrall pushed off Brazos, and he went to the bottom, and apparently the horse was gone: but in a few moments the alligator head appeared near me, and Brother Thrall shouted: "Oho! I have got a Campbellite." After Brother Thrall got over, we ate our lunch and said our prayers, and Brother Thrall proposed that we then and there enter into a covenant never to take anybody's word for the condition of a stream, or any other difficulty or hindrance that might be in the way to an appointment, but to go and see. This resolution has been a great help to me in meeting my appointments. On many occasions, during my forty years' ministry in Texas, I have had frequent reports of impassable streams, epidemics and other hindrances ahead; but have kept my covenant with Brother Thrall, and have gone and seen, and have made my way through.

The year closed, all things considered, successfully, and

I wended my way to the conference, which was held this year at Robinson's meeting house, in Montgomery county.

PALO BLANCO RANCH, July 9, 1884.

No. 3.

REMINISCENCES OF A SUPERANNUATED PREACHER.

I left my readers on my way to Conference at Robinson's meeting-house. Here for the first time I saw all the Texas preachers. The members of the Conference and those on trial numbered in all about forty. They were a noble, self-sacrificing band. Of that company of comparatively young and healthy preachers, all have gone to their reward except Josiah W. Whipple, Homer S. Thrall, James G. Johnson, Jesse Hord, James H. Collard, and the writer. I may have left out some names in this list, as I write from memory. Bishop Andrews presided, and Thomas O. Summers was secretary. To me this Conference was a grand occasion. There was so much of love and affection among the preachers, and such a spirit of self-sacrifice and consecration to the work of the Lord, that my soul became knit to these dear brethren. This Conference was composed of men from different portions of our great country, all called together to do a great work in spreading the gospel in Texas. I received my appointment to Victoria circuit or mission, with Chauncy Richardson as presiding elder. The circuit embraced all the settlements in what is now Calhoun, Victoria, DeWitt, Gonzales and Guadalupe counties, and required about 270 miles of travel to go round it, or rather up and down it, for all the towns and settlements were along the Guadalupe river excepting Port Lavaca, on the bay. The Indians were hostile and travel was dangerous. During the year, seventy-eight horses were stolen by the Indians in the neighborhood of Gonzales and four or five persons were killed in the bounds of the circuit.

It was a year of some success. At Seguin we had a gracious work. We had several accessions who became pillars in the church. Among these was John R. King, now living at Stockdale, and a member of the State Legislature. Captain James H. Callahan was converted this year at a quarterly meeting at Seguin. He was a noble and brave man; was a successful Indian fighter. He is honored with the name of a county in this State. A few years ago he was killed by a desperado. I have already mentioned the name of Chauncy Richardson, my presiding elder. He was a model man and a model presiding elder. He visited from house to house among poor and rich alike. He took great pains with young preachers in correcting their manners and directing their studies. He never missed an appointment when there was any possibility of getting to the place. He preached from three to eight times at every quarterly meeting I am more indebted to Chauncy Richardson than to any other man, dead or living. In April of this year (1844), in company with Rev. John McCullough, of the Presbyterian Church, I made my first visit to the ancient city of San Antonio. We started at Victoria and traveled up the valley of the Gaudalupe to Seguin. At this place we procured an escort of Captain Hays' Texas Rangers. Between Seguin and San Antonio we passed through what was then a most beautiful country. The valleys were not then, as now, covered with a dense growth of mesquite bushes and small trees; but were covered with a beautiful coat of grass about knee high. There were a few large mesquite trees, and on the hills a considerable amount of live oak and hackberry. Immediately on the creeks was a rich and abundant growth of pecans and elms. The grass was interspersed with beautiful flowers of the greatest variety of colors. A person coming to San Antonio, now, surrounded as it is by a thick growth of bushes, can have hardly any conception of the beau-

and loveliness of the country when I first visited it. We put up at a hotel kept by Anton Lockmar, an Italian, situated on Soledad street, not far from the convent. It was then the outside house in the direction of San Pedro Springs. We took a general look about the city, visiting San Pedro Springs, and the missions below the city. We notified the English-speaking people that we would have preaching on the Sabbath. We met at the county clerk's office on Commerce street. This office was on the ground now occupied by Bell & Bro.'s jewelry store. The old building has long since been torn down to give place to a better one. About fifteen persons attended the services. I tried to preach from 1 Tim. iv: 8, and had a good degree of liberty. Rev. Mr. McCullough closed with a very appropriate prayer. All that congregation, except two, have long since passed away. On Monday we visited the mill, eight miles below the city, and called at the rangers' camp on the way. At the mill we found Messrs. Kerr & Higginbotham, builders and proprietors of this mill, doing a good business sawing lumber and grinding corn. The people from Seguin and below on the Guadalupe had their grinding done here. Mr. Kerr was a strict member of our church, and, with his wife and sister-in-law, Miss Martha Ann Higginbotham, were the only members in all this region. I shall have more to say of these people in another number. Mr. McCullough and I left on Tuesday for Seguin, where we parted, but to meet again in this same city of San Antonio. The year was not remarkable for revivals, yet we had some precious seasons. At John Polan's, twelve miles below Victoria, we had quite an ingathering of souls. Mr. Polan and family were converted, also Mr. Trailor and family. They all joined our church on probation. But our Presbyterian brethren at Victoria succeeded in in getting them all into their church. Several incidents occurred this year perhaps worthy of relation. On my first round, as I was passing through the town of Gonzales, near night, on my way to

Mr. T. J. Pilgrim's, who lived a mile above town, a man by the name of Jones came out of a saloon and caught my horse by the bridle, saying: "Aint you our preacher?" I told him I was the preacher sent to that circuit. "Well," said he, "you must go and stay with me. We keep the preachers." I saw he was in liquor and tried to beg off. I showed him the plan of the circuit, with Brother Pilgrim's name on it as a house for the preacher, and told him I felt it my duty to go there first. "No, no," said he, "you are to go with me. Pilgrim is a Baptist, and my wife is a Methodist; and you are to stay with us this good night. When we get to the house I'll show you why I am drinking." I concluded to go. As soon as I was introduced to the family, Mr. Jones requested me to walk out to the stable with him. There lay a large Newfoundland dog with an Indian arrow pierced right through his heart. "There," said Jones, "was as good a dog as ever wagged a tail. The Indians killed him last night, and took out of this stable as good a colt as was ever raised in Gonzales county. Now, look here; do you see that door cheek of heart post oak, six inches wide and one inch thick? See how the red rascals have cut it off with their butcher knives to get the lock chain out? Well, sir, I had a race on that colt which was appointed for to-day. The forfeiture was forty dollars if I did not run. I went down to pay up like an honest man, and on the strength of it got gloriously drunk. Now you understand it all. Let us go to supper." I found Sister Jones a very pleasant lady, and spent the night under their roof quite agreeably. This man was generally known by the cognomen, "Go it Jones," or, for short, "Goat Jones," to distinguish him from the numbers of the Jones name who lived in the vicinity. Not very long after this he was converted at a Cumberland Presbyterian meeting, joined that church, and lived for many years a most exemplary Christian life, and an honored and respected citi-

zen. His wife died near the close of the year, and I had the mournful pleasure of preaching her funeral.

In May or June of this year I started from Lavaca, in company with United States Consul Smith, his wife, and two little Mexican girls that Mrs. Smith was raising, to go to Victoria. On account of the green-headed flies, we concluded to go at night and, as the road was very muddy and much farther, we concluded to cross the prairie, taking the north star as our guide. After we had traveled about three hours, our beacon became obscured by clouds, and we had to make our way as best we could. About one o'clock we came to a bunch of timber, and I knew we were lost, as there was no timber between Lavaca and Victoria. There was no alternative then but to stop and wait for the morning. Before I proceed I must say a few things about my friend, Consul Smith. He had a fine education, was an excellent business man; but was lacking in good, practical, common sense. He was of low stature, somewhat stooped, was terribly disfigured by the small pox, and withal, lisped very badly. At the place where we stopped, the grass was very tall and thick, and the mosquitoes just as bad as they could be. Mr. Smith and I had, each, a good mosquito bar, so we strung up his bar for Mrs. Smith and the children, and he and I fixed up mine for our accommodation. Mrs. Smith and the children were soon fast asleep, and I had just got off when Mr. Smith called out: "Mithter DeVilbith! I feel a thnake." I told him to lie still; if it was a snake it was under the blanket, and could not hurt us. He quieted down, and I went to sleep again. He called again, louder than ever, "I tell you I feel a thnake, and I will not lie here any longer." As soon as he arose I felt a snake too, and we got up and went to a log near by, and fought mosquitoes till daylight. We looked for our snake in the morning, and found a crooked stick lying crossways under our blanket, so that when I would move it would turn under Mr. Smith, and when he would move it would turn

under me. So this was the snake that made us lose our rest. When we had looked about, we found we were about a mile from the Guadalupe river, about twelve miles below Victoria,and one mile from Brother Polan's. We saddled up and soon found a hearty welcome at Brother Polan's. I laid down and slept until breakfast was ready. When called up, we found two chickens on the table, cooked in the best style, with biscuit, coffee, etc., to match. I never enjoyed a breakfast more than that. After praying with this kind family we made our way pleasantly to Victoria. Mr. and Mrs. Smith were both members of the Presbyterian church. She was a lady of refinement and a most exemplary Christian. She was a niece of President Tyler.

In going up the country, on one occasion this year, when about to cross Nash's creek, in Guadalupe county, I saw a man, or boy, in the bed of the creek, going through some very strange gesticulations. I thought it was an Indian, and prepared for battle by getting my short rifle in position. As I approached nearer I discovered that it was a lad of about fifteen summers, with a Spanish water gourd in his hands. He would shake the gourd terribly, and then peep through a crack, and then shake again as if it was a case of life and death. And indeed it was, for in answer to my inquiry: "What are you doing?" he said: "Three mice in a gourd; two dead and one aint." I stayed with Chess Kimble (for that was the name of the boy) until the last mouse had expired; got well over my scare, and went on my way rejoicing. This year closed, and I prepared to go to Conference, which was to be held at San Augustine, three hundred and fifty miles from my circuit. This was a long journey to make; but, as I was to receive Elder's orders, I felt in duty bound to go. The attendance was full, and Bishop Edmund S. Jones presided. It was a pleasant session, and very profitable to my soul. With Brother Thrall, I stood up and took upon me the solemn vows of an Elder in the Church; then we knelt together while the

Bishop and Elders laid their hands upon our heads, and the Bishop repeated the words: "The Lord pour upon thee the Holy Ghost," etc. I gave myself anew to the ministry, and felt a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. The General Conference of 1844 divided the Texas Conference into two, the Texas and the East Texas Conferences, and I fell into the Texas Conference, and was appointed to Gonzales circuit, which was the upper half of Victoria mission, it having been divided. David L. Bell was appointed to the lower part, still called Victoria circuit.

PALO BLANCO RANCH, July 29, 1884.

No. 4.

REMINISCENCES OF A SUPERANNUATED PREACHER.

In my statement, in a preceding number, in regard to the preachers who still live of the number who attended the conference in Robinson's settlement, I find that I omitted two honorable names, to-wit: Robert Crawford and J. C. Woolam. Brother Crawford was my predecessor on the Victoria mission, and was much beloved and respected by all the people. The plan of the circuit, made out by Brother Crawford, was a plain and comprehensive guide to his successor, and was a great advantnge to me in entering this, to me, new field of labor. Brother Crawford lives at Georgetown, Texas, a superannuated preacher and a practicing physician. Brother Woolam lives, I believe, at Jacksonville, in Eastern Texas. I have learned recently of his deep affliction, and the severe operation which he has undergone in having a tumor cut from his lip. God bless the old man and give him grace in his years of affliction and decline.

The conference closed at San Augustine, and I wended my way to Egypt, my first circuit in Texas. Here, on the February 11, 1845, I was married to Miss Talitha Ann Menefee, Rev. Jesse Hord officiating. We went to our field

of labor at once, and were kindly welcomed everywhere. I concluded, in the absence of a parsonage and the impossibility of renting a house, to build a small house of my own. We selected Seguin as our place of residence. I attended to my duties on the circuit, and in my spare time assisted in cutting and hauling logs for a cabin to dwell in. I had considerable assistance on the part of my neighbors and friends in constructing my house, for which I felt very thankful. Finding it would be some time before our house would be ready for occupancy, my wife, in company with her brother, went back to Egypt to make the necessary preparations for moving to our new home. By the first of April the house was sufficiently advanced for me to go after my wife and household goods. I borrowed a wagon at Gonzales, and after a day's hunting I got up two yoke of steers—one of them never had been yoked—and hired a boy, about thirteen years of age, whose name was James Tinsley. With this outfit I started for Egypt. It was about 100 miles from Gonzales and 130 from Seguin. It had rained a great deal and I had a very hard trip. One of my leaders being a raw steer, we had a great deal of trouble with our team. I had to drive most of the way myself. Jimmy, though a good driver with a gentle team, could not manage wild stock. When we were some three or four miles east of Big Hill, a noted place for Indians, we met three men who were direct from the United States and looking at the country. They were going to San Antonio. In about an hour and a half the same men came riding back, with their horses foaming and sweating, and reported Indians at the Big Hill. In answer to my inquiries they said they were camped and had a fire, and were staking out their horses. I told them they were certainly white folks dining there who had Mexican servants, which they took for Indians. But no: they were Indians! they saw the buckskin leggins, and even the moccasins, and they were bareheaded! I told them that all suited very well for

Mexican servants, and I was sure they were mistaken. They went on east, and I drove along leisurely, and about dark arrived at Henry Terrell's on the Navidad, a noted stopping place and a good home for Methodist preachers. Here I found our frightened men. Brother Terrell and I tried to convince them that what they saw were not Indians; but it was no use; they were perfectly sure that they were. In about half an hour the Indians came up. It was Col. Volney E. Howard and family, of San Antonio, who had with them some half dozen Mexican servants and a bunch of horses. They had dined at the foot of Big Hill, in a beautiful live oak grove. They saw our scared men and called to them; but could not arrest their attention. That night it rained very hard, and in the morning, which was Saturday, our host and his good wife begged me to remain over Sunday, assuring me that I could not cross Skull creek without swimming. I told them "I would go and see." When we got to the creek we found it out of its banks, and about one hundred and fifty yards wide. I had my faithful horse, Fox, with me, and knew he was a safe swimmer. So, in order to keep our bedding, clothing, etc., dry, I had a load bound on my back and swam over. Returning I got another load, and took Jimmy on behind me, and swam over again. I then swam back, without the horse, to bring over the wagon and team. I fastened a rope to the head of my wild leader, and taking the other end in my right hand, I found the steers could swim much faster than I could with one hand, and they drew me under the water; and beginning to take in water very fast I let go the rope, and the team made the shore all right, where Jimmy received them and drove them out to dry land. After a good deal of choking and coughing from the water I had taken in, I righted up and we cooked our dinner, which we enjoyed very much after our fatigue and labor in crossing the creek. We drove that afternoon to Columbus; and arriving about dark we

found a cordial welcome at Brother Dewees'. As the Sabbath was approaching, the brethren sent around a notice for preaching at 11 a. m., Sunday. A good congregation collected and I had great liberty in preaching, and to me this was a day of great comfort. Monday morning we left for Egypt, thirty-five miles distant, and after eighteen miles of hard travel through mud and water, we camped for the night at the head of Eagle Lake, near where the town of Eagle Lake now stands. After supper Jimmy took a chill and was quite sick. I saw a very threatening cloud in the north, and knew that we were going to have a wet norther. There was a vacant house about two hundred yards distant, but on the other side of a small creek, which entered the lake at this point. I concluded to get my sick boy over to this house, if possible. So I went into the creek to see if I could wade it. I made a misstep and fell in all over. I found a place, however, that I could wade, though it was nearly up to my armpits. I got Jimmy straddled across my neck, with a blanket in his arms; and though it was very dark, by taking advantage of the flashes of lightning, I passed the creek in safety and was soon at the house. This, I found, a poor protection against a storm. The chinking was all out, no floor in it, and only half the roof on. I laid Jimmy on a door that was made by nailing weather-boarding crosswise on two pieces of scantling. The boards being lapped, it made a rough bed for a sick child; but his fever soon rose and he went to sleep, and slept soundly all night. The norther soon came with a terribly cold rain and terrific thunder. I found myself becoming chilled, and feared I should perish, as my clothes were wet from head to foot. I looked about by the flashes of lightning and found a good sized stick, such as I could handle conveniently, and by dint of will-force I sang (or rather chattered at first) and beat upon the sleepers until a reaction took place. I began with "How Happy Are They," and sang every hymn I knew and then went over them again. The hymns I sang were

none of the namby-pamby compositions of the present day; but those good old theological compositions, such as "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "Come, O! Thou Traveler Unknown," and such like. I fear, had I had nothing to sing but "Pull for the Shore, Sailor," "Sweet Gallilee," and such like, I should not have made it through that terrible night. I kept this up at intervals all night. The morning came at last, clear and bright, though quite cool; and after partaking of some hot coffee, bacon and corn bread, we hitched up our team, and about 4 p. m. we landed at good old Egypt. The family were very much astonished to see us, as they supposed the rains and floods would have detained me. After two days' rest and preparation, we proceeded to return to our field of labor. The weather became settled and we had a very pleasant journey. Our outfit had added to it a horse and buggy, and one of my brothers-in-law came with us part of the way. I owned a good open buggy, and my father-in-law gave my wife a good horse, though rather old, whose name was Pontetoc. We took him into the traveling connection, and he proved to be an excellent itinerant. In a few days we landed safely at Mr. Grinage's, two miles below Seguin, where we learned that our house was not ready for occupancy, as my good friends had not done the work which was promised. We concluded to board at Mr. Grinage's untill our house was finished.

In about two weeks we moved into our new home, and felt quite comfortable. For the sake of our brethren, who live in fine parsonages, and are "caned" and "pounded" and clothed, I will here give a description of our house, and living. The house was built of elm logs, 14x12, and hewed on the inside. The cracks were covered with split boards, and the roof was made of the same, nailed on, shingle fashion. We had no floor, except mother earth. After we moved in, I built a kitchen 8x6, by setting some posts in the ground, and nailing split boards to them, and constructed a rude fireplace. We had corn bread, bacon and

black coffee as our bill of fare, and were happy and contented. Our friends drove us up a cow in a week or so, and then, we had milk and butter, which was a great help to our living.

I mentioned in my last that Victoria circuit was divided, and Gonzales circuit was the upper part. San Antonio was one appointment on the circuit this year; and soon after we got fixed in our new home, wife and I made a trip to this ancient city. We found a kind reception at the house of Mrs. Vanderlip, who still lives in the city, an honored and respected member of the Presbyterian church. I preached in the parlor of the Verimenda Hotel, the same building in which the brave Milam met his sad fate.

The hotel was kept by Messrs. Crump & Lockmar, the latter, the same gentleman who was mine host on my first visit to the city. Mr. Lockmar fixed up the room in a very neat and proper manner for divine service, with a clean white cloth on the table, a pitcher of water, and comfortable seats for the audience. He also placed on the table a bottle of port wine. I told him I would rather he would remove the wine. He contended that it would greatly assist me in speaking, and that the priests in Italy would not preach at all without some good wine to assist them, and added with emphasis: "This is a first-rate article." I told him that Americans did not approve of such things, so the wine was taken away. Mr. Lockmar was a model of hospitality and politeness. I was kindly entertained, free of charge, by Messrs. Crump & Lockmar, at every visit, and had good congregations once a month, during the year. I however, made no effort that year to organize a church in the city. During this year was held the first camp-meeting on the Guadalupe river. The camp-meeting was held on McCoy's Creek, a tributary of the Guadalupe. The neighborhood was called Cuero settlement, as most of the people lived on a creek by that name. It was about thirty miles below Gonzales, and five miles above the present town of

Cuero. This was in several respects a remarkable camp-meeting. One large live oak afforded shade for the whole congregation. We had a number of Captain Hays' rangers, under Lieutenant Greenwood, to guard our houses from the Indians. Captain Greenwood still lives at Del Rio, on the Rio Grande, an old gentleman with a large family, beloved and respected by all. The preachers in attendance at this meeting were, Chauncy Richardson, presiding elder: Homer S. Thrall, Wm. S. Hamilton, David L. Bell and Dr. John Crawford, a local preacher, and a brother of our esteemed Robert Crawford, before mentioned. At the first call for penitents, thirteen came forward, and the same number and the same persons continued to come at every call during the meeting. Thus things went on till Monday night, without one single conversion, and we all felt sad to think that our meeting was about to close without any conversions. After preaching and a few prayers, Brother Richardson proposed that the penitents should rise up and join the Christians in singing the covenant hymn beginning:

"Come let us use the grace Divine,
And, all with one accord,
In a perpetual covenant join,
Ourselves to Christ the Lord."

The hymn was read as Richardson alone could read a hymn. A solemn awe appeared to rest upon the entire audience, and sobs and groans were heard among the penitents. After the singing Brother Richardson called on Mrs. De-Vilbiss to pray, and such a prayer! So simple, so humble, and yet so eloquent. During that prayer eleven were converted, and after all had retired to their tents, another was converted on the grounds; and the thirteenth was converted after she got home, as she lived near by. This was one of the happiest nights of my life. These converts were about equally divided between male and female, and most of them were heads of families. I have been able to keep sight of these converts for many years; and though some

of them went off to other churches, I never heard of one of them going back to the world.

While living at Seguin we were often troubled no little with a tribe of friendly Indians, the Tonkawas. They would come to town and sell their venison and peltry, and on the proceeds get gloriously drunk; and it was fearful and horrifying to see them in a state of intoxication. One old man, called Captain Johnson, was especially annoying to me and my wife. He could talk a little in English, and when he came the first thing was something to eat, and he could take on more at one meal than would have sufficed wife and I for a whole day. He frequently came intoxicated and was very troublesome. But this friendly tribe was not the worst Indian trouble we had this year. The hostiles came in occasionally and would spread consternation and alarm throughout our little town. One evening I had a severe chill, which was followed by a raging fever. About 10 o'clock that night Captain Callihan and Mr. Baker came up to our house, and informed us that the Indians were in, and had killed a man near town about dusk; and as we were in the outside house it was unsafe, they thought, for us to stay there. I was quite sick; but this news aroused me. We got up, and, escorted by these two gentlemen, we went down town to a large house, where we found the whole town assembled. All the men of the town, except a few very old ones and the sick preacher, were off in half an hour after the Indians, led by the intrepid Callihan. They camped that night near the mountains, in what is now called Stringtown, and early in the morning found the trail of the Indians. As soon, however, as the Indians struck the cedar-brakes they scattered, and our men finding it impossible to trail them further, returned home. The red skins got off with one scalp, and some fifteen good horses.

This was a year of some prosperity on the circuit. The settlements increased considerably. When the year closed

I took my wife to her father's, at Egypt, and went on to Conference at Houston. The roads were desperate, it being a very wet winter; and our Conference began February 4th, 1846, later than usual. After hard toiling through mud and water, I arrived safely at Houston the day before Conference. I reserve a description of the Conference for my next communication.

PALO BLANCO RANCH, September 22, 1884.

No. 5.

REMINISCENCES OF A SUPERANNUATED PREACHER.

I left my readers at Houston, in attendance at the Conference in 1846. The venerable Bishop Soule presided, and Chauncy Richardson was secretary. The vote on the great division question was taken at the Conference. The roll was called and the vote was unanimous for division and adherence with the South. From this time we were in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. This was a very pleasant session, and to me the preaching was very instructive and edifying. Bishop Soule's sermon, on Sunday at eleven o'clock, on the "Priesthood of Christ," was a master-piece. I received my appointment to San Antonio mission station. The Church was poor in means to carry on mission work, and my appropriation was small. I believe it was $200

I went immediately to Egypt, took leave of my wife's family, and at once set out for my field of labor. Arriving at Seguin, I found it was ascertained by a survey of the town that my house was built on the wrong lot, and I lost all my labor in building, as the party who owned the lot would neither pay me anything for my improvements nor allow me to move my house. I moved immediately to San Antonio, and finding no convenient house in town, I rented a small house seven miles below, in the neighbor-

hood of Kerr & Higginbotham's mill. This I found a very pleasant place, and in order to supplement my living, I took a small school and taught in the house in which I lived, until the neighborhood built a school house, which hey did in a short time. I found some difficulty in gettingt a permanent place to preach in in the city. I finally succeeded in getting permanent use of the court house, on the east side of the main plaza. I procured lumber at Kerr & Higginbotham's mill, and with my own hands made seats and pulpit. Here we began a small Sunday school, which constantly increased in interest. Some of the members of that Sunday school are now prominent citizens of San Antonio. We had one great annoyance. Just at the hour of preaching a large crowd would assemble in the same plaza and engage in a chicken fighting. The noise of this iniquitous assembly greatly disturbed our worship. I am sorry to say that the leaders in the affair were Americans. About this time some fiend reported to Hays' company of rangers that, in a communication which appeared in the WESTERN CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE, published at Cincinnati, Ohio, describing my first visit to the city, I had greatly berated the rangers, and represented them as a low, contemptible set of men. The truth was, that there was not a word in the publication about the rangers. But this report greatly excited the wrath of these men, and they made a plot to duck me in the river.

There were, at that time, five or six ladies in the city representing nearly as many churches—a Catholic, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist and Episcopalian, and some others friendly to the gospel. These ladies heard of the plot and held a meeting on the occasion, and appointed a committee of one (Mrs. Col. Volney E. Howard) to notify me of the trouble in advance. I felt greatly obliged to these good ladies for the interest they had taken in the matter. I told Mrs. Howard that if the ladies would notify these gentlemen to be present the next Sabbath, I thought I could

explain everything satisfactorily. The plot was to have been executed Saturday night, but was suspended till they heard me. On the Sabbath a number of the rangers were present for the first time. The explanations were satisfactory, and I heard no more about the ducking. After this trouble some of the rangers were in the congregation every Sabbath, and the chicken fighting was abandoned, so far as the plaza was concerned.

My presiding elder, Brother Mordecai Yell, did not get out to the city till the latter part of May. He brought with him Rev. J. C. Colbe and Rev. David Coulson. Never was a lonely frontier preacher more rejoiced to see his presiding elder and these visiting brethren than was I. I wept tears of joy on their arrival. We had a regular quarterly meeting service in the city, and quite an impetus was given to the mission. On Monday I had the pleasure of having all three brethren dine with me. Brother Yell still lives, an honored superannuate of the Northwest Texas Conference. Brother Coulson lives at San Antonio—a local preacher, and a very healthy, vigorous old gentleman. He carries on a large dairy establishment. He is still the same good man, and preaches almost every Sabbath. Brother J. C. Colbe, transferred to the California Conference some years ago, and has since died. Some time in June or July of this year, Rev. John McCullough and wife, together with Mr. Sayers and wife, came out and settled in the city. Mr. McCullough started a high school. Mr. McCullough and I concluded to hold our services together, and everything went on smoothly. We preached on alternate Sabbaths, and on the intervening Sabbath I preached in the neighborhood where I lived, at Brother Wm. P. Kerr's. Mr. McCullough was the same gentleman who was in company with me on my first visit to the city, in 1844. He was a very firm Presbyterian, and withal a man of deep piety. He and I met every Thursday evening to have a season of

prayer and religious conversation together. These meetings to me were very profitable, and were very much like our own Methodist class meetings. In June, of this year, I organized a class. So far as I am able to recollect, it consisted of the following members: Mr. Wm. P. Kerr and wife, Miss Martha Ann Higginbotham, Mrs. Tabitha Ann DeVilbiss, (the pastor's wife,) Mr. M. G. Cotton and wife, and Gustavus Elly, and Martha Lucinda Kerr, who joined on probation. Not long after this organization, Mrs. Trumble joined by letter, and in the fall of this year Matt R. Evans (not Matthew R. Evans, as published in the JUBILEE ADVOCATE, but simply Matt,) his wife and daughter—Miss Augusta Jane (the authoress) came out from Georgia and joined by letter. Of these members, I believe only five are now living, to wit: Gustavus Elly, (a superannuated preacher in the M. E. Church), Mrs. M. G. Cotton, Mrs. Rachel Kerr, Miss Martha Lucinda Kerr (now Mrs. J. W. DeVilbiss), and Miss Augusta Jane Evans, now Mrs. Wilson, of Mobile, Alabama.

On the 24th day of June of this year, was born to me a daughter, who only lived a few hours, and then fell on the sleep of death. On the 15th of August, my wife quietly passed away to the land of rest. This was a sore trial to me, for she was a helpmeet indeed, in my ministerial work. Of her it may be truly said: "She was steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." With my appropriation of missionary money and what I received from my small school, I found it very difficult to make ends meet.

After the death of my wife I made a trip to Egypt to convey a little negro girl, which my father-in law had given to my wife, to her old master. Although, by law, I had a life-time claim to this child, yet I preferred to give her up to her former owners. I had the painful task of conveying to the family the news of my wife's death. I feared at first that her mother would sink under the severe stroke.

She rallied, however, after several day's sickness, and I returned to my field of labor. I made my home at Mr. Kerr's, at the mill, and kept up my labors, with some indications of success, till the close of the conference year. We took the preliminary steps towards building a church in the city. I secured an eligible lot on Valita street, and we elected five trustees, viz: Wm. P. Kerr, Matt R. Evans, M. G. Cotton, Gustavus Elly and Marcus Y. Trumble. Mr. Trumble was not a member of the Church, but a good friend of our cause, and his wife an earnest and faithful member. The Conference met this year at Chappell Hill, Bishop Paine presiding and Channey Richardson secretary. I was appointed to San Antonio mission station. At the close of this Conference I concluded to visit my friends in the North, and do what I could towards collecting funds for building our Church. I received very flattering recommendations from Bishop Paine, especially commending the object of my visit in collecting funds for the Church. I also received a recommendation from our Board of Trustees, endorsing my course, and urging the object of my visit upon the liberality of the people. I left San Antonio about the first of May and spent two and a half months in making this trip. I visited New Orleans, Cincinnati, Pittsburg, Wheeling, Lexington, and Frankfort, Ky., and various other places. I did not get much money, but obtained a great deal of material for building, together with many things that I knew would sell well in San Antonio. Among other things, I obtained a good bell at Cincinnati, the price of which was $110. This bell still calls the people together at Tenth-Street church in the city.

When I returned, I paid for our lot in hardware that I brought on, and felt that we were succeeding. We still worshiped at the old court house on the main plaza. I made a frame upon which to hang our bell, and placed it on our Church lot. I wanted to let the people see that we had made a start. Our bell was on one side of the river

and our worship about a quarter of a mile from it on the other. I was sexton as well as preacher, and would ring my bell and then go over to meet my congregation. The Mexicans gave me the very significant cognomen of "*El Padrecite que tiene La Campana*," "the little priest that owns the bell." During my absence in the North, our Presbyterian brethren had bought a lot and began to build a small adobe house on Main street, and persuaded me to turn over to them the building material which I had brought with me, consisting of glass, nails, etc., with the understanding that we should occupy their house conjointly, and when we built they would return this material either in kind or money. I reluctantly consented to this arrangement. Our bell was moved over to the new Church, but not put in with the other material. Our seats and pulpit were also taken to the Church, and answered a good purpose.

From that time we worshiped with our Presbyterian brethren in the new church, and everything still went on smoothly and kindly. This was near the close of the year 1847. About this time I learned that the title to our Church lot was not good, and we lost the lot, and did not receive even indemnity for the purchase money. This was a severe stroke to me, as I had felt that with the lot we had at least a foot-hold on the soil of San Antonio; but now, after two years' hard labor, we had no place to call our own. In August of this year, I opened a small school in the southeastern part of the city, and continued to teach till the close of the Conference year.

On the twenty-eighth of September of this year, I was married to Miss Martha Lucinda Kerr, who still lives to care for me and bless me in my old age. The Conference was again held at Chappell Hill, Bishop Capers presiding and Chauncy Richardson secretary. I was appointed to Ruterville circuit, Robert Alexander presiding.

In my next number I propose to give some incidents of interest connected with my labors.

PALO BLANCO RANCH, Oct. 27, 1884.

No. 6.

REMINISCENCES OF A SUPERANNUATED PREACHER.

I left my readers at Chappell Hill, at the conference of 1847. I proceeded to San Antonio, and taking leave of my wife's people, I moved with my young wife to Ruterville circuit. The first point on the circuit was the Black Jack settlement, on the Navidad, near where the town of Flatonia now stands. I put up at Hon. Wm. Menifee's, my first wife's father, who lived in this neighborhood. I was about to start to LaGrange and Ruterville to procure a house to live in, but the good old judge interposed and said I had to live at their house. He built a nice room for our accommodation, put a chimney to it; so we were made comfortable. This was a year of great blessing. Geo. Rottenstein had been on the circuit the year before, and had had an extensive revival. He left many probationers on the circuit who had to be looked after, and I found my *head*, my *heart*, and my *hands* full to look after these lambs of the flock, and take them into full connection. I rejoice to say that every one of those probationers, except a few who had moved away, were received into full fellowship, and made faithful members. Some of them became prominent as active, useful men and women of the Church of God. Among these probationers was Miss Rebecca Gilliland, now the widow of Rev. O. Fisher, D. D.

This was a year of wonderful revivals at various points on the circuit. At Black Jack we had an abundant outpouring of the spirit. I never saw clearer conversions, and many were added to the church. I tried to fix me up a home this year for the second time. Judge Menefee gave

me one hundred acres of land, on which was a beautiful and never failing spring. Here I spent all my spare means, and all my spare time in hard labor, to build me a house and fix myself for living.

HIS LOVE FOR THE SABBATH.

[From a letter of Brother DeVilbiss in the Texas Christian Advocate.]

I see in your issue of December 29, an article from the facile pen of my respected brother, William J. Joyce, under this heading: "To the preachers who travel on the cars on Sunday." I heartily approve of and endorse what he says on the subject. I am glad he wrote those things and wrote them so well.

I am living near San Antonio and have often seen Christian men—and sometimes they are preachers—do things equally reprehensible and equally violative of the great scripture law of the Sabbath. A brother, and perhaps he is a preacher, comes to the city on Saturday with country produce; buys his family supplies, remains with his team in a wagon-yard over night, and deliberately hitches up on Sabbath morning and leaves for home—fifteen or twenty, or, perhaps, twenty-five miles distant. Thus he spends all, or nearly all, of the sacred hours of God's day on the road. Suppose this brother passes a cotton field on the way, where a German, his wife and several children are picking cotton. He calls to him: "Halloo! my friend; do you know it is the Sabbath?" "Yes! yes!" answers our German friend. "Then why do you work to-day? Do you not know that it is wrong and a violation of God's law?" "Well, I do not know that for certain; but what are you doing driving your team over the road?" "Oh, I am going home." "Where have you been?" "To the city, to sell my produce and buy my family supplies." "And you left home on Saturday, did you not? You knew

you could not get back on that day. Thus you work on the Sabbath to save time, and I work on the Sabbath to save time, and to save my cotton which is wasting; and I think I am the best man of the two."

It is no uncommon occurrence to see whole families of professed Christians start on a journey on Sabbath morning. I believe with Brother Joyce, "that if every believer in the Bible would absolutely refuse to patronize the railroads on Sunday, the cars would cease to run on that day." I believe if every Christian man and woman would cease to violate the Sabbath, in any way, it would work such a revolution in the public mind as would restore to Christendom the holy Sabbath in its original purity, and with all its attendant blessings.

PALO BLANCO RANCH, Jan. 8, 1884.

HIS LOVE FOR MISSIONS.

[The following was sent to the preachers of the West Texas Conference by Brother DeVilbiss, as President of West Texas Conference Mission Board.]

Though confined at home by sickness, yet my heart is fully imbued with the great work in which you are engaged. I have thought lately that, although I am not able to enter with you the great out-door field, yet I might do something for the blessed Master's cause by an occasional line in our beloved ADVOCATE. I do thank God that we have such a medium of communication; that we can talk as friends and brethren, and strengthen each other's hands in the great work of the Lord, through the ADVOCATE. Though some of us are on the retired list, that is no reason why we may not write; and I am very thankful that I am still able to write without much nervous quiver.

The grand missionary anniversary at San Marcos, which lasted from Saturday at 7 p. m. till 11 a. m. Sunday, still lingers in my mind. Those were among the happiest hours

of my life. While I accord due praise for the manner in which the leading speakers presented the subject on Saturday night, there was one actor on that occasion, of whom little mention is made, but who I consider contributed as largely as any one to its success. The Bishop's appeal to the human conscience, direct and pointed, was what the occasion needed, and Dr. Bourland's moving pathos and home thrusts were all wise and in place; but it appeared to me that Brother A. H. Sutherland was specially inspired for the occasion; especially so on Sabbath morning. His face fairly shone; and it did appear that there was a divine afflatus resting upon him. Well, it was a grand success. Now, brethren of the Conference, carry this boom with you into all your fields. How very thankful I felt that for one year we were able to allow our domestic missions a decent support. But, brethren, much depends upon your efforts on the circuits, missions and stations, whether the full amount appropriated is finally raised. I make these appeals to you as your old friend and former co-laborer in the work of the Lord. "May God bless you all."

CHAPTER III.

HIS APPOINTMENTS FOR FORTY YEARS.

We copy the following list of appointments from his own record:

First Year.—Admitted on trial in the Ohio Conference, September, 1840. Appointed to the Coolville circuit; J. W. Young in charge; Samuel Hamilton, Presiding Elder.

Second Year.—September, 1841. Appointed to Belpre circuit; James B. Austin in charge; Isaac C. Hunter, Presiding Elder.

Third Year.—September, 1842. Transferred to the Republic of Texas, and appointed to Egypt circuit; Henderson D. Palmer in charge; John Clark, Presiding Elder.

Fourth Year.—December, 1843. Sent to Victoria Mission; Chauncy Richardson, Presiding Elder.

Fifth Year.—December, 1844. Gonzales Mission; C. Richardson, Presiding Elder.

Sixth Year.—December, 1845. San Antonio Station; Mordecai Yell, Presiding Elder.

Seventh Year.—December, 1846. San Antonio Station: Mordecai Yell, Presiding Elder.

Eighth Year.—December, 1847. Ruterville circuit; Robert Alexander, Presiding Elder.

Ninth Year.—December, 1848. Franklin circuit; Josiah W. Whipple, Presiding Elder.

Tenth Year.—December, 1849. Nashville circuit; Mordecai Yell, Presiding Elder.

Eleventh Year.—December, 1850. Nashville circuit, name changed to Caldwell circuit; Wm. C. Lewis, Presiding Elder.

Twelfth Year.—December, 1851. No appointment; pecuniary embarrassments.

Thirteenth Year.—December, 1852. Caldwell Colored Mission; Wm. C. Lewis, Presiding Elder.

Fourteenth Year.—December, 1853. Caldwell Colored Mission: James M. Wesson, Presiding Elder.

Fifteenth Year.—December, 1854. Caldwell circuit; Homer S. Thrall, Presiding Elder.

Sixteenth Year.—December, 1855. German District.

Seventeenth Year.—December, 1856. German District.

Eighteenth Year.—December, 1857. German District.

Nineteenth Year.—December, 1858. German District.

Twentieth Year.—December, 1859. Helena District; Rio Grande Conference.

Twenty-first Year.—December, 1860. San Antonio District; Rio Grande Conference.

Twenty-second Year.—December, 1861. San Antonio District: Rio Grande Conference.

Twenty-third Year.—December, 1862. Goliad Station; James W. Cooley, Presiding Elder: President *pro tem.* of Conference.

Twenty-fourth Year.—October, 1863. Aranama College.

Twenty-fifth Year.—December, 1864, San Antonio circuit; Wm. J. Joyce, Presiding Elder.

Twenty-sixth Year.—October, 1865. San Antonio District; presided in conference; elected to general conference.

Twenty-seventh Year.—October, 1866. Agent of the American Bible Society.

Twenty-eighth Year.—November, 1867. Agent of the American Bible Society.

Twenty-ninth Year.—November, 1868. Agent of the American Bible Society.

Thirtieth Year.—November, 1869. Agent of the American Bible Society.

Thirty-first Year.—December, 1870. Corpus Christi District.

Thirty-second Year.—November, 1871. Corpus Christi District.

Thirty-third Year.—November, 1872, Corpus Christi District.

Thirty-fourth Year.—November, 1873. Cibolo circuit; A. A. Killough, Presiding Elder.

Thirty-fifth Year.—October, 1874. Cibolo circuit; J. S. Gillett, Presiding Elder.

Thirty-sixth Year.—October, 1875. Agent for Southwestern University.

Thirty-seventh Year.—October, 1876. Clinton circuit; A. A. Killough, Presiding Elder.

Thirty-eighth Year.—November, 1877. Clinton circuit; A. A. Killough, Presiding Elder.

Thirty-ninth Year.—October, 1878. San Antonio Mission: W. T. Thornberry, Presiding Elder.

Fortieth Year.—October, 1879. San Antonio Mission; W.T. Thornberry, Presiding Elder.

In 1881 superannuated: which relation he held until death dismissed him from all earthly relations and charges. Such is the life and toils of a faithful itinerant minister of Jesus in this world. His reward is not here: it is of the imperishable.

CHAPTER IV.

HIS SERMONS AND SKETCHES.

[Below we copy a good little sermon from quite an old manuscript, though without date. It is upon Joseph's timely advice to his brethren.]

"*See that ye fall not out by the way.*"

Genesis xlv:24.

We have selected the above passage of scripture as the foundation of some practical reflections this morning. It is the more interesting to me as it is connected with one of the finest narratives that is to be found in any book, either sacred or profane. The circumstances which gave rise to these words are very interesting, and if you could not read them, we might dwell upon them with profit for a length of time, but, as many of you are acquainted with history, and others can read it at home, we refer you to the Bible.

This advice was given by Joseph when he sent his brethren back to Canaan to bring down their aged father into Egypt.

The propriety of the charge at that particular time will be apparent to everyone when we consider for a moment the peculiar circumstances with which the sons of Jacob were environed.

Joseph had just made himself known unto them, and they would naturally be inclined to converse on the way about the extraordinary event of having found their long lost brother. This consideration would lead them to reproach themselves and each other for their wicked conduct in selling him to the Ishmaelites, and also consulted how they should manage to relate the story in a becoming manner to their father. And while conversing they would be strongly tempted to criminate each other in regard to their

wicked deed in selling their helpless brother long years before. Each would be ready to excuse himself and criminate more than himself.

Thus differences would arise, old grudges would arise and the seeds of future animosities be sown in their hearts. Joseph foresaw all these probable calamities, and wisely admonished them "not to fall out by the way."

That caution was opportune and excellent. Joseph, with that affection which so greatly distinguished him, had freely forgiven them, and had received them with open arms, and manifested a deep interest in their future welfare. Was this a time then for them to accuse and upbraid each other? Having so recently received so much kindness from their injured brother, mutual kindness was now truly demanded of them towards each other. Should not the recollection of their foul deed of guilt and of the mercy they had received, and the happy change that had taken place in their affairs, induced them to give up their former animosities, and in brotherly love go on their way rejoicing?

We see, then, the propriety of Joseph's admonition. We should rejoice to know that the need of such caution was limited to the sons of Jacob; but, alas, how much is the peace of society disturbed at the present day by unchristian quarrels and fiend-like contentions? Often public meetings are disturbed by quarrels and fightings, where love and harmony ought to prevail.

I propose to consider this subject further, *in the extent of its application, in the means of its infraction, and in the advantageous manner of complying with it.*

In regard to the first point of consideration, we may call your attention first to the subject matter in this admonition. It simply means, avoid all contention and strife. Lay aside all animosity. Bear one another's burdens. Cultivate peace and unanimity of feeling by every means in your power. In a word, live in love and charity with all around you.

Secondly, the persons to whom these words may be addressed:

All who are traveling together, along the same road. In this view every human being may be included; for we are all traveling along the same road, to the same end. "I am a stranger in the earth," said the Psalmist; and this is the character in which every son and daughter of Adam appears, and acts upon the stage of life. We are strangers in the earth, we are here in a foreign land, through which we travel to our native country. Life is but a pilgrimage. Death is its end, and every fleeting hour brings us nearer the terminal point. To all mankind the admonition is given to walk peacefully together in their pilgrimage through this vale of tears.

But Christians especially are addressed in this admonition, because, in a very important sense, are they fellow travelers. They set out together on their journey to Heaven. They are, by profession, brethren: walking by the same rule, animated by the same hopes, exposed to the same dangers, contending against the same difficulties and beset by the same enemies. To Christians, then, it may be said, with the greatest propriety, "see that ye fall not out by the way." If Christians, generally, may be called fellow travelers, those living in the same neighborhood, and, who meet at the same house of worship, who hear the word of life from the same pulpit, may more especially be considered such. But to those who stand related to each other as members of the same society the admonition is still more needful; and, lastly, those who are bound together by the strongest ties of nature and consanguinity, who meet at the same fireside, who eat at the same table, and combat in close contiguity the same trials, it is truly said, "see that ye fall not out by the way." In the second place, we notice the means by which this admonition may be disobeyed. Were we to notice all these we should occupy too much time for this occasion. We shall speak only of a few of them, which

may be included under the head of evil speaking. Perhaps, of all the means of spreading dissensions and exciting evil passions, there is none so prolific as that of evil speaking. It may be divided into slander, detraction and back-biting. Slander is the uttering false speeches against our neighbor to the prejudice of his fame, safety or welfare, and that out of malignity, vanity, rashness, ill nature, or some bad design. In a word, it is charging others with deeds, motives or principles of evil which do not, in truth, attach to them. We can not represent the odiousness of the sin of slander in a more forcible way than by quoting the words of Massilon. He says, "The tongue of the slanderer is a devouring fire, which tarnishes whatever it touches, which blackens what it cannot consume: a disguised hatred which sheds in its speeches the hidden venom of the heart;" an unworthy duplicity which praises to the face and tears in pieces behind the back. It is a soulless evil which disturbs society's peace and spreads dissension whereever it goes. The holy scriptures bear their testimony against this odious vice. The ninth commandment says: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

The second kind of evil speaking is detraction, or the saying of things calculated to let a man down in the estimation of those to whom we address our words. It means to take off from a thing, and, as it applies to reputation, it denotes the lessening a man in point of fame, rendering him less valuable by others. Detraction is especially directed against the laudable actions of good people whose reputation it seeks to lessen in public esteem. A detractor allows no one to exceed himself in deserving qualities. "Oh, my soul, let me not come into his secrets, let not mine honor dwell in their assembly."

Reviling is another species of evil speaking which is condemned in the Word of God. It is the use of bitter and foul language. It is sometimes termed railing. It

is also contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and highly disturbs the peace of society.

But, perhaps, the most insidious source of evil speaking in society, is called "back-biting." That is, speaking of the faults and failings of others behind their backs; and such faults in our power oftentimes to cure, by taking a scriptural course to do it. It seems to be a common error among us to think we have a right to speak of the wrongs of others, if we speak the truth. The Bible says: "Speak evil of no man;" and to Christians, it says: "Speak not evil one of another:" and they point out the means by which we are to have our brother set right, if he sins against us. We are to go and tell him of his fault when we are alone, etc.

We are not at liberty to speak evil of each other, though it be truth. If it be evil, our speaking of it will not tend to cure it. To speak of it to another is only to make the matter worse. We must observe this rule strictly.

Mr. Wesley took strong ground on this subject. But there are exceptions to this rule. Persons in the administration of justice, and God's ministers, and where it is necessary to guard a friend against imposition.

Nearly allied to this sin is tale-bearing, or carrying evil reports about a neighborhood. The tale-bearer has been called the devil's "post horse," engaged in his meanest drudgery and doing his darkest work.

I have briefly sketched some of the causes of "falling out by the way." There are others, but we risk nothing in saying that two-thirds of all the broils in society are caused by evil speaking in some way.

In the third place, we call attention to the advantages of living in peace, and some of the means of so doing.

Surely there is a great moral good resulting to a society when living in peace. A quarrelsome and a contentious spirit is not only a melancholy proof of the irreligious state of the heart, but it is the greatest hinderance to any change being wrought in the heart. "Where envying and strife

are, there is confusion and every evil work." St. Peter tells that, in order to profit by the word of God, we must lay aside all malice, and guile, and evil speaking. There is also a great temporal advantage in living in peace. Happiness attends peace, but misery follows discord. The things in this life are enjoyed in proportion to the peace and quiet of society. A dinner of herbs, where love abides, is better than a stall-fed ox, where hatred reigns. No one is more wretched than the quarrelsome man—a misery to himself and a disturbance to others.

In conclusion, we point out some of the means whereby we may live in peace. In the present state of the world, entire peace is not always practicable. If possible, says Paul, live peaceably with men. But, as Christians, we must follow peace with all men. We must not speak evil of others, nor listen at it when others do. Refrain from envy and hate, and cultivate love for all men. It will not allow of the indulgence of any of the hurtful tempers towards others. We must remember that we are brethren, and are traveling the same road as pilgrims to the grave and to the great judgment, where we must give an account of how we have lived here.

Indulgent reader, you have just read a plain, practical little sermon from our zealous missionary to the Republic of Texas. Remember that it was delivered to society upon the border, which was mostly composed of stockmen, living mostly in tents in the wilderness. A minister of religion must find out the prevailing evils of society, and expose them in the light of God's word; and must rebuke them sharply. When you think of the earnest fiery zeal with which that missionary delivered his rebukes to those frontier evils, you will not be astonished to see how rapidly society rose up to a higher civilization.

[Here we copy you another sermon upon a different theme.]

The Obligations the Gospel Imposes upon All Men

"Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your bodies and spirits, which are God's."—1. Cor. vi:19, 20.

One of the chief differences between infidelity and faith, is that infidelity throws off all obligations of accountability to God: while faith claims, amplifies and enforces them.

Full faith embraces the entire system of revelation—as to history, doctrines, precepts and promises: and recognizes our entire accountability to God. There, too, is a semi-infidelity which appears to consider religion as a subject of comparatively small importance, and something that may be attended to at any convenient season, when other business does not demand our attention. But the duties of religion embrace all our obligations in all relations of life. Indeed, we all are under the most solemn obligations to devote our whole being, soul and body, to God: and all our worldly interests must subserve our spiritual advancement, and aid us in glorifying God upon earth.

We use this text as a foundation of some practical observations on man's obligations and accountability to God. The ground of obligation, as presented in the text, is that God has ownership in us: "Ye are not your own."

This ownership grows out of other considerations. God is our creator, and our existence is a pleasure unto us. We rejoice that we are, that we live in this beautiful world. God might have made us so that life would be a misery to us. So that all we might hear would be a discord, every odor a stench, all we might see painful, and all we might taste a distressing bitter. But we are made to enjoy life.

Our being is distinguished from the brute. We live as intellectual and moral beings, while the brute is driven in pursuit of enjoyment by force of blind instinct. Man stands forth as the head and governor of this world, and from obligations arising out of his creation he is bound to love and obey his Creator.

God, too, is our kind preserver. Life is sustained only by His presence and power. The Christian philosopher regards nature as the channel in which God's life-sustaining energies flow into all orders of being: "In Him we live and move, and have our being." Hence we are obliged to obey His laws. He is also our benefactor. All the blessings of this world come from His bounteous hand. Upon God's earth we live, breathe His air, bask in His sunshine, and feast upon His bounty. Hence, again, we are bound by ties as strong as life itself to love and serve Him.

But the chief and strongest right of ownership God now has in us is that which arises out of redemption. We sold ourselves for naught. We were lost. We were dead. But God redeemed us: bought us back by the ransom of His dear son.

His son became incarnate. A body was prepared for him. In that body he suffered, he bled, he died, for all men. He tasted death for all men: and all men are bound unto him by that redemptive tie.

Thus we see that every individual of the human race, of all ages and nations, is bound to glorify God, because He has created them, has preserved them; because he has bestowed all good upon them; but most of all because He has bought them with a price; that price, the life, the blood, of Jesus Christ, His only begotten son.

Of this most excellent sermon we have given a mere synopsis. It is rather lengthy in manuscript.

[We now copy an abridged portion of another good sermon that the reader may see the pure ideas of our great missionary, and see how he preached in plain language, but fervid zeal, to the roaming population of the new republic.]

Rebellion Against the Divine Spirit.

"But they rebelled and vexed the Holy Spirit; therefore, He was turned to be their enemy, and fought against them."—Isaiah lxiii:10.

Out of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity many of the vital doctrines of the Gospel arise. The Father gives His son. The son assumes human nature, becomes a man, dies to save all men; and the Divine Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, enlightens and regenerates the souls of men. But man is an agent, and is, in a sense, the arbiter of his own destiny. He can yield to the spirit's influences and be saved; or he can, of his own will, reject them and be lost.

It is not meant that man is stronger than God, and can defeat Him in combat, but that God made man a free moral agent, and will not do violence to his will. Man's accountability is predicated upon his free agency, and no extraneous power can deprive him of the right of choice and still hold him amenable for his conduct.

The Divine Spirit may be resisted by us in many ways. He is called the spirit of truth; and to embrace error and practice falsehood is to resist and reject the spirit of truth. He is called the spirit of holiness; and to love and practice the impure is to resist and reject the spirit of holiness. He is styled the spirit of grace; and all feelings and works of cruelty rejects that gracious spirit. In a word, to continue in the love and the practice of any sin, is resistance against the Divine Spirit.

When all gracious influences fail to reform the sinner the spirit turns from him, and leaves him to his doom.

CHAPTER V.

HIS BIBLE AGENCY.

[In 1877, he was appointed agent of the American Bible Society, by Bishop Marvin, at the request of Dr. Baird, the general agent of that society. Below we copy from the Bible Society Record a brief account of his labors for that benevolent institution. O, how vast is the amount of good resulting from his immense labors!]

WEST TEXAS CONFERENCE.

With great pleasure we publish the following report of the committee of the West Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, upon the Bible cause. The period of time covered by its account of the services of our excellent agent is but ten and a half months. This report is a model of its kind.

At the last session of this conference, Bishop Marvin appointed Brother J. W. DeVilbiss agent for the American Bible society, at the request of Dr. Baird, the general agent of that society.

Brother DeVilbiss has devoted his energies faithfully to the prosecution of the work assigned him, as the subjoined facts will show:

He has traveled over 3500 miles; delivered 148 addresses; and preached seventy-six sermons; visited thirty-six counties, and nine of these twice; collected $2,416.20; written 216 letters; and sent out 112 printed documents; ordered $10,000 worth of Bibles and Testaments; organized and revived forty-three societies and nine Bible committees; and has thus, by his indefatigable labors, placed that precious book, the Holy Bible, in the hands of many who were destitute.

The great destitution of Bibles throughout the bounds of our Conference and adjoining Conferences, brought to

light by our agent, shows the great necessity for, and the propriety of the special agent to this work.

Your committee beg leave to invite the special attention of this conference to the fact that our section of country is largely indebted to the American Bible Society for the gratuitous distribution of the Bible among our people, as the reports from the Society clearly show. The donations from the Society exceed by a large amount the funds contributed by us to the Society. The American Bible Society is not only not complaining on this account, but, on the contrary, is cancelling many of the old debts due by Bible societies in our midst, that distributed their Bibles to our soldiers during the war. We therefore hope that our preachers and people will see that it is not only our duty, but vastly to our interest, to co-operate heartily and cordially with the American Bible Society in its operations.

Your committee are highly gratified to learn that our ministers, as well as the ministers of other denominations, have given our agent a cordial reception, and rendered him a hearty support wherever he has been enabled to visit them.

Your committee offer to the Conference for its adoption, the following resolutions:

1. *Resolved*, That this Conference appreciates the great work in which the American Bible Society is engaged, in sending the Word of Life to all men; and that we will heartily co-operate with it in this glorious work.

2. *Resolved*, That we ask of the Bishop the reappointment of the present agent, J. W. DeVilbiss, to that field of labor.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Rev. J. W. DeVilbiss, of Western Texas, furnishes some passages of his recent experience. A bible agent on the Texas frontier has no easy berth, at least if these extracts

are fair specimens of some of his trials during a journey of 647 miles, and an absence of seven weeks from home:

On my way I hired a lone freedman to escort me over a most dangerous road of twenty-six miles without a human habitation; night overtook us, and providentially, we met three men, who agreed to camp with us. We divided the night into five watches, and stood guard, each taking his turn, all night. In the morning I arrived at Bandera about breakfast time. A little girl about five years old had told her mamma that she would wait in the portico till noon to watch for me; she was at her post when I arrived, and, clapping her hands with joy, said, "O Ma! Ma! he has come before breakfast: I am so glad: now we will have preaching." This little incident moved me to tears. You will be astonished when I tell you that this town had not had a sermon by any orthodox preacher in six months. Oh how they turned out, and how they listened, and how they went into the Bible interest! I cannot describe the scene. I addressed the people three times, and preached three times in addition

Our Conference is just over. I remain to hold the anniversary of the Bible Society here, which takes place tonight. We had a pleasant session; the Bible cause was not overlooked, as the enclosed report of our Bible Committee will show.

Your circular was received in due time, and read carefully and considered fully. I am determined to bring this matter before all the committees, and have thus far brought it before my audiences, and I think the people begin to right up on the Bible Society's real claims upon them. I feel sometimes discouraged in view of our financial depression, but I am determined to go forward, trusting in the God of the Bible.

In a subsequent letter, he says:

You wish me a happy Christmas and New Year. I must tell you how I spent those days. Christmas Eve I preached at Clifton, in Bosque county, and organized a Bible Com-

mittee: Christmas Day I drove thirty miles over as rough a road as there is in Texas, alone, and watched for Indians all day: preached at night at Gatesville, and wrote till ten o'clock, p. m.: New Year's Eve I got lost and bogged in the snow, and finally got to a house eight o'clock, p. m. New Year's Day I drove twenty-two miles through a mixture of snow, mud and water: ate a cold snack for dinner, and at night had hard work to get to stay at a Baptist brother's house, who in the morning charged me one dollar and twenty-five cents specie, and I went on my way rejoicing. My family did better, for they had a turkey on Christmas Day: but my wife says she could not relish it because the Bible agent was not there.

A HAILSTORM IN TEXAS.

Rev. J. W. DeVilbiss, our agent in Western Texas, sends us the following account of a fearful hailstorm in the region of San Antonio and its vicinity. It is one of those incidents which illustrate our correspondence, and which often, like other striking providences, materially affect the movements of our co-laborers and the interests of our work:

Since I left home, this section has been visited with the most awful hailstorm ever known in this country. The storm was attended with a desolating wind, which, together with the hail, destroyed an immense amount of property. The loss in San Antonio alone, is estimated at $250,000; several lives were lost, and great numbers of sheep, cattle and horses were killed, and in the valley of the San Antonio river there was almost a total destruction of the corn and cotton crop. They report some hailstones weighing five and a-half pounds, and great numbers weighing one and a half pounds. I have to say to the praise of my gracious Heavenly Father, that although the storm destroyed the crops east, west, north and south of me, my own crop, and

those of a few of my neighbors, were unhurt, and mine not even touched by the storm. One man, living only two and a half miles from me, had his house unroofed, and a beautiful field of sixty acres of corn almost entirely destroyed. The field looks as if little stakes were driven all over it: the ears, the blades, and two-thirds or more of the stalks entirely cut off. Surely, God has a controversy with the people, and oh, that they would lay it to heart! During the storm a theatre in San Antonio was in full blast, and when the great hailstones began to come through the window-blinds and through the roof, the theatre was turned into a prayer-meeting, and it is said that both actors and audience were all on their knees, imploring divine aid.

WESTERN TEXAS.—PERILS AND BLESSINGS.

Our agent, Rev. J. W. DeVilbiss, sends us, in his report for January, this striking illustration of the way in which God blesses the labors of his servants, who trust in him and are not afraid of danger:

Drove to this point through much danger and hazard of losing life and team. Indians all through this and Medina counties. Met Judge N—, who informed me that the district court was broken up by the Indians. A lad, fourteen years old, had been killed only three miles from Uvalde. He advised me to return, and assured me that I could not collect a congregation. But after taking a calm view of duty and *God's protecting power*, I moved on to the place of duty and labor. Attended anniversary—got the attention of the people: preached five times and delivered an address in town; visited Fort Inge, three miles distant: preached to the colored troops: distributed to them eighteen Bibles and eight Testaments, which were received with many expressions of joy and gratitude.

One interesting point in this month's labor has been the interest manifested by the freedmen in the Bible. I have sold to them several large family Bibles, and find an increased interest among them in learning to read.

THE BIBLE AND THE INVALID.

Our agent in Western Texas sends this affecting incident: "While traveling on the Texas frontier, I came to a house in a lonely mountain glen, several miles from any other human habitation. I asked the gentleman, who was in the yard, if he wished to buy a Bible. He remarked: "I have no Bible, but I am too poor to buy one." But when he found he could buy one for forty-five cents in currency, he bought two, one for himself and one for his sister-in-law, who resided with him. He then looked at me very earnestly and remarked: "There is a sick lady in the house, who, perhaps, would like to see you." I walked in, and there beheld an emaciated form, flushed with fever and apparently in much pain, lying upon a bed. She looked at me with a most imploring and affecting look, her eyes filling with tears and her lips quivering with emotion, and said: "Sir, are you not a minister?" I told her I was. "Well, sir," said she, "I have not seen a minister for nearly three years; and if you have time, I would like for you to pray with me before you leave." I told her that I always had time to pray. I then read a chapter, and kneeled at that bedside and worshipped with that lonely family. When I arose the whole family were bathed in tears. The sick lady then asked for one of the Bibles; she opened it and laid it upon her bosom, and said: "Oh precious Book of God! I have been without thee for three years. I lost my Bible in moving to this country." And turning her eyes toward me, she said: "Sir, it does appear to me that God has sent you this way, to pray with me before I die, and to leave in my house the precious Holy Bible. You appear like an angel

sent to me in my afflictions. I thank you. Oh! I *do* thank you! I *will* meet you in Heaven." I left that house, weeping for joy. I felt amply paid by that one incident for all my toil, care, and exposure to danger, in traveling on the frontier.

That agency opened a large field for usefulness to a devoted minister of the gospel. It was a kind of double method of preaching the gospel. It aided the distribution of the printed gospel upon a large scale, and it afforded the minister a fine opportunity to preach it to the multitudes. His appointments usually called together the friends and patrons of that national benevolent institution—national because it was the recipient of the benevolence of the nation. And the friends of the Bible, both in and out of the churches, were brought together upon the occasions of the anniversaries of the auxiliaries, which gave the agent a large congregation to whom to present the claims of the Bible cause upon the benevolence of civilized man. In doing that he must needs dwell upon the truth and divine origin of the sacred scriptures: the reasonableness of their doctrines, the purity of their morals, and their tendency to elevate, and refine the human race. Mr. DeVilbiss did that with fervid earnestness and stimulating zeal.

The Secretary of the American Bible Society informs the writer that his work as agent was entirely satisfactory to the Board of Managers of that institution, and his resignation of the agency was owing to home causes. His presence and active services were needed to aid in the location and building up of one of the most desirable institutions for the good of the country and the prosperity of Texas Methodism —the Southwestern University of Georgetown. In that enterprise he did much hard and profitable service. Aside from the direct growth of Methodism in Texas, he was concerned for the large and firm establishment of two great Methodist institutions in the State—the TEXAS CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE and the Southwestern University of Georgetown.

They were truly pet themes with him, because of the large channel of influences for good they opened up in the State, and in the church. If any one chanced to say anything seeming disfavorable to either at the annual conference sessions, you would see Mr. DeVilbiss rise for a defense. Love for these enterprises displays his good judgment and the purity of his moral taste; for truly are they deserving the esteem and patronage of all good men and citizens in the State. The ADVOCATE has long been, and is still, a power in the land against all vice and crime in this new and wicked country. It has led in the front for years in creating a public taste that disavows hurtful vices, and favors virtues that insure peace and prosperity to society. It has been the vigorous medium of the extensive prosperity of Methodism specially, and of religion generally, in this land of mixed population.

Georgetown is certainly the place of centralized moral and religious influences in this broad empire State, focalized by the high tone of its University. There are many other good schools in Texas and other States, but the writer has not visited one other that so generally controls the morals of society around about it. Everything about Georgetown wears a quiet moral feature. At other places Legislatures have created charters against the trafic in ardent spirits within a number of miles of the schools, to protect their morals, but at Georgetown the saloons fall in the ranks of moral influences which the University sends out upon society, through its large class of studious pupils, and its faculty of wise and pious men. It also sends out to the churches a large class of pious youths, almost annually, from its religious altar, erected in the churches. It really is worthy of the patronage of the wise and the good—lovers of wisdom and virtue. It ought to inherit the highest honors of the State in which it is located, as surely as it is the pride of Methodism. Its endowment lay near the noble christian heart of Mr. DeVilbiss. Truly it is deserving. He lived to see it wearing the laurels of success.

CHAPTER VI.

HIS WORK AMONG THE GERMANS.

By Rev. F. Vordenbaumen of the German Annual Conference in Texas.

In December 1856, at the Texas Annual Conference, in Galveston, Bishop Pierce, presiding. John W. DeVilbiss was appointed presiding elder for the whole German work in Texas, including eleven appointments; a very large territory, extending from Galveston up to Fort Mason—a distance of three hundred and fifty miles; south from Galveston to Victoria and Yorktown, and westward to Medina county, to Newfountain, and the now Hondo City. Each round upon the district required one thousand miles travel; not upon railroads, but upon horseback: nevertheless he was at his post every time. He was much beloved by our German people. He was a good man, a good preacher and an industrious, good pastor: a great friend to children. Our work prospered during his four years administration as presiding elder. In order to acquire a more ready knowledge of the German language, he moved to New Braunfels, a German town in Comal county. While there, he learned to speak, read and write the German language tolerably well. He was much beloved, even among the infidel class in that city. He would study his sermons and write them in English, then translate them into the German tongue: then he would read, and re-read them in German, until he could read them to the edification of his German congregations.

In December, 1858, the Rio Grande Conference was organized and a part of the German work was left in the old Texas Conference, which lessened the area of the German district he had traveled; yet it was large enough to occupy all his time. Our German preachers regretted it much when his four years term as presiding elder was out, and

they had to part with him who had been their friend, counsellor and guide four years. He still lives in the memory of the German people. He was a man of much prayer. I often traveled in company with him, and when the sun would be going down he would say "let us get down and pray that God may give us grace when the sun of our life is setting, and that we may rise in glory with our glorious Lord, and live forever with him." Brother DeVilbiss was not only a good preacher, but he was a revivalist. He had gracious revivals at all his quarterly meetings. He was also a fine singer, a spiritual singer, and O, how he did love to sing our German songs! Blessed memory! Indeed we did enjoy some gracious seasons together in the work of our holy calling, while winning souls to Christ. He was likewise a very conscientious man about keeping the Sabbath day holy. He, together with myself and Rev. W. P. Reed, traveled in the same ambulance to the Annual Conference at Waco, in 1857, and on our return trip we were delayed by high water at Leon river, from morning until five o'clock in the evening, when we crossed it with great difficulty and danger, and went to Belton, and found a pleasant home in a hotel. There were about twenty preachers in the crowd during that night, being Saturday, and it rained all night; on Sunday morning all the other preachers concluded to drive some four miles and cross the Lampasas river before it overflowed its banks, but Brother DeVilbiss would not go on Sunday; saying that his conscience would not allow the deed. All the others went but we remained in Belton, and we started the next morning for New Braunfels, and reached it safely on Christmas night; but in crossing the Blanco river, near San Marcos, we were providentially saved from a watery grave. The river was swimming, and in crossing, the ambulance dipped in the wate up to our shoulders, but it did not capsize, but went over in safety. Being wet all over, we drove to Brother Vicker's, two miles south of San Marcos, where we met a kind

welcome. He was always in a good humor, and was a pleasant traveling companion. We truly were sorry when he returned to the American work; but really more so when he was called to go where we shall not see him more until we shall meet on the other shore. May the good Lord bless his dear wife and children.

CHAPTER VII.

HIS WORK AMONG THE GERMANS.

BY THE COMPILER.

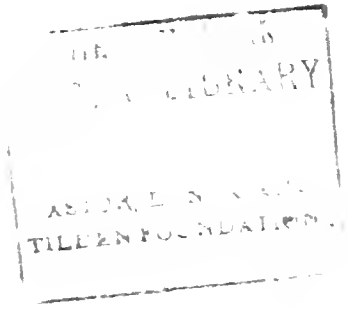
It has already been stated that he was the first Presiding Elder in the German Methodist Church in Texas. In 1856, a German district was formed, covering all the territory of Texas, and on that vast field he did faithful work. To say that he was popular among the Germans, does not fully express the facts. He was *beloved* and *esteemed;* beloved by the Church and esteemed by outsiders. That district finally grew into a separate German Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; but, of later years, its prosperity has not equaled the advance of the times. The German Methodist of the Methodist Episcopal Church seems to attract the German element of Texas more readily; and it is now thought by some that the two branches will soon merge into the Methodist Episcopal Church. The late General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, left it optional with her German members to disband their Annual Conference and attach themselves to the American Conferences in their respective localities, or remain as they now are. As few Americans understand the German language, and as but few Germans, either ministers or laymen, understand the English, that measure is virtually giving them up to the Methodist Episcopal Church. Indeed, if it cannot maintain itself, and if the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is too poor to grant it help, then it had better coalesce with the other German element. Any way, the two German elements are more congenial than in any other affiliation. In fact, no real cause of their separate existence seems now to exist.

Whether Mr. DeVilbiss was of German parentage, is not known to the compiler: but his name, and his general phys-

ical build and complexion would, it seems to him, indicate a German descent. He was quite staunchly built, of light hair and fair complexion. His name, "Devilbiss," which was its original pronunciation, must have been German; the stress of accent put upon the first syllable—Dev. There are two accounts of the change of the accentuation of the syllables in the name. One states that it occurred while he was attending Augusta College, in Kentucky; and the other, we believe, is that it was done in Texas. The accent is now laid upon the second syllable, Vil, and is pronounced De-Vilbiss. It is no discredit to any man to be descended from the "Tueton" race. Their present offispring has given to modern history the largest class of profound thinkers in science and theology. They are now a robust, hardy and industrious race of people; more so, perhaps, than any other race of modern times. In Texas, there are two classes of this remarkable people. The intellectual and refined; and the uninformed, selfish, clanish, yet industrious class. All are industrious. Religiously, there are likewise two classes. One is atheistical and skeptical; yet, good citizens; the other is a Christian class, and it is strictly religious. Some are Roman Catholics, some are Lutherans, a few Baptists and Presbyterians, but the largest number are truly Methodist, of the strictest type. All are good citizens. A peaceable race; having little use for weapons of violence, as Texas-Americans. The skeptical and atheistic have no religion; seek to derive no pleasure from any religious rites. Their social pleasures are sought at the dance hall, the Sabbath beer garden, and the gaming table. They disregard the Sabbath day, and desire its abolition. It is difficult to reach this class by religious influences, because they seldom attend a place of worship, and do not read religious literature. They manifest a disposition to influence legislation in the abolition of the Sabbath day, and claim *absolute freedom* from all *religious restraints*, as they believe in no religion, no God. This atheism is generally found among the

more intelligent ones among them; and it is thought to be a rebound of the intellect from the oppressions of Catholicism in the Father Land. From one extreme the mind reaches the other, the opposite—no God—no religion. Perhaps the future may develop some plan which may reach this non-religious element in this great State. Even among this part of the German population Mr. DeVilbiss was esteemed and respected for his earnest, conscientious zeal for the welfare of their race. He spared no available efforts to plant religious knowledge among them, and to build up those that avowed a belief already in Christianity; and when this little volume is printed, some of the Germans will purchase and read it, to refresh memories of the native born American who labored so arduously to promote the moral and religious interest of their people in their adopted country.

H. A. Graves.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CHAPTER VIII.

THE YOUNG MISSIONARIES—THEIR INTENTIONS.

They are not health seekers or pleasure hunters, going upon an excursion for a few months or years, and then to return to the associations of home, kindred and friends. No, gentle reader, they go not to return! Their parting with dear ones and the land of their youth, when they stepped upon the steamer from the Ohioan shore, was final! They go to return not until the heavens are no more! They go to a new land, a land of strangers; and the untutored savage, armed with his bow and arrow, tomahawk and scalping knife, roams over its wild prairies. They go to make that land their home; to spend the strength of youth, the prime of manhood, and the remnant of age upon its untilled soil; and, finally, to find a grave-home in its dust. In them is a heroism, surpassed only by Him who came to give His life a ransom for all. Others went before them, and many are still going; but quite different their motives. The objects aimed at are as opposite as the poles. Some went to see the world, and return at will; others go to speculate in cattle and cheap lands; home embarrassments drive some to seek to renew their fortunes in a new country. The motives of all these end in earthly things. But the young missionaries have no investments to make in temporal things; for they have nothing to invest. Their stock in trade consists of a Bible and hymn book in their saddle wallets; and the love of God, and a pity for ruined men in their hearts. Moved on by these emotions, they go to glorify God and save men. The labor of these young men, for more than forty years in their adopted country, attest the purity of their intentions. Acting under a similar commission, they follow the example of one who said: "Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord." Their

grand commission reads: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." That part of the world called Texas was assigned to their commission, and to it they readily go.

Can any candid man doubt the truth of Christianity, or the divine call of men to preach the Gospel, when reading the lives of these two men, and thousands more of similar ones? Their lives display their hallowed motives. No earthly considerations move them. Only the good of the world, and a blissful immortality, drive on their chariot wheels through the dangers and toils of a long life. Why are other young men not found in their ranks? Their comrades at home feel no such emotions. The common objects of earth inspire their energies and heat their zeal. Where do these youthful preachers get the emotions that inflame them? Nature did not furnish them; they were not born in them. They were imparted by a divine influence. An impulse quickened in their hearts by the Spirit of Christ, and absorbing all other impulsions. Under its inspiring fires St. Paul said: "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." Animated by the same holy unction, these young men count not their lives dear unto them, and speed on their way to the land of dangerous toil allotted them.

Now, indulgent reader, let us look back a little while, and see where we parted with those young heroes a short time ago upon the steamer, cleaving the waters of the mighty river, bringing them nearer the land of their destination. Time moves on like the ceaseless flow of unopposed waters of the giant river, and we next find the new sent missionaries upon Texan soil, ready to begin their life work in the kingdom of Christ. Soon they enter the Texas Annual Conference, and are on their way to their first circuits, in the thinly settled regions of the Brazos, Colorado and Guadalupe rivers, covering hundreds of miles of territory; peopled only in spots here and there along the borders of the great rivers, while the vast prairies between those

rivers were an unsettled wilderness, occupied by large herds of cattle and horses, wild beasts, and fowls, and roamed over by the uncivilized savage. These young men had but lately left the crowded and busy scenes of civilized life. Had left behind them tall steepled churches in which they had worshiped with the great congregations; ceiled houses in which they had reposed in night's sable hours, in a land of luxury and plenty: but they must now meet a small audience in some private log cabin, or invite the little group to the shade of an ancient live oak to hear the gospel of their mutual salvation. They were just fresh from the tables of variety, suitable to satiate man's variable appetite; but now they are in a land of little variety of the food of life for man or beast. For beasts the grasses of the wilderness were their stay and staff; for man, at that period, Texan fare consisted mainly of beef, bread and coffee, and the flesh of wild animals. Yet in all this marked change of things those inexperienced young men were happy. They thought not of a return to the "flesh pots" of their early home. Hope of seeing the golden harvest day of their labors in the years to come cheered and gladdened their hearts in the planting and toiling seasons of cultivation. We fancy we hear them singing in their hearts, while wending their way across the great prairies, hunting up the homes of the lost.

"But when I am happy in him
December's as pleasant as May."

Again we hear the melody of their song mingling with the silent solitude of the lone prairie.

"No foot of land do I possess,
No cottage in this wilderness,
A poor wayfaring man;
I lodge awhile in tents below,
Or gladly wander to and froe,
Till I my Canaan gain."

Their Canaan was not in the broad acres of Texas. It lies over yonder. It is in the fairer fields of Eden. Sweet fields that fade not. As Abraham of olden days, these men sought a "better country." Their lives confirm it. When

they reached Texas, millions of her rich lands could have been bought for ten cents per acre. They made no purchases. Their lands are not now found in the unfenced empire of free grass, or bound by barbed wire in closed pastures. Their flocks, or herds are not seen grazing upon the great commons, nor upon enclosed pasture lands; they have them not. Lands and herds are there, but deeds and titles to them are recorded in the names of other men. Their titles hold another species of property; of it they sweetly sing:

"When I can read my title clear,
To mansions in the skies,
I'll bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes."

While other men bought and sold, and many of them grew rich, these wayfaring men of God traveled and preached to the incoming multitudes, and laid firmly the basis of Protestant Christianity in these lands. After the arduous toil of forty-two years, the man whose life is briefly sketched in this little volume died poor, leaving sparse means for the support of his widow and single daughter.

The reader will please excuse the digression we here make to admonish the world and the church he so earnestly and so faithfully served, for their unjust and shameful neglect of the aged and worn out preachers, and the dependent families of the dead. Surely, the laborer is worthy of his hire. It is just that he should be paid it. That hire should be compensative; and when age, or disease, disqualifies him for labor, ample provision should be made for his support and those dependent upon him. The rich men of the world go on buying and selling and building palatial homes and large business houses, as if they were to stand firm upon their foundations always, and as if they were to dwell in them forever, and seem not to think of any obligation to contribute anything for the support of the man who spends his life in telling them of a more enduring heaven, that shall remain fadeless when all earthly things

have fallen into dust. And the church John Wesley De-Vilbiss served, nearly a half century, is greatly at fault in the little pittance she provides for her disabled servants. She builds massive churches at home and in foreign lands; allows liberal salaries to missionaries in distant fields, while her helpless home servants, and the widows and orphans of her dead ones, hardly get annual half rations. Here is an unjust inequality. Duty calls for a change: that change must come. Financial boards are awakening to a sense of duty in these things.

Thanks are due Rev. W. J. Joyce and others of the West Texas Conference, who, for a number of years, have striven to make some provision for the superannuated of their Conference. Guilt must attach to a partial neglect of God's helpless ones. The Gospel teaches that the rich must help the poor: the strong must support the weak, and the well must take care of the sick and dying: and they that preach the Gospel must live of the Gospel; that is, must get their material support from those to whom they preach the Gospel.

CHAPTER IX.

HIS WRITINGS, ETC.

I have just finished the reading of his journals, covering a term of thirty years, twenty of which are daily records of the minute and the more important events of his life. The first one bears date of 1855. But the oldest specimen of his writings I have seen is dated 1844. It is an essay upon the life and character of Constantine the Great. It was written for the committee of examination for the ministers of the fourth year, his year of graduation in the "course of study," assigned to all "undergraduates," by the church to which he belonged, and the end of his term of probation for "Elder's Orders." An essay, or a written sermon, was required of each member of the graduating class for the order of an elder. At that time he, and his fellow-laborer, Rev. H. S. Thrall, were ordained elders, according to Episcopal Methodist economy. Of that essay we must say that it would be creditable to the talent and genius of any young man, and it must have elicited a good report from that committee, and have inspired the Conference body with high hope of the ability and future usefulness of their youthful brother. We say youthful, for he was then only twenty-four years old, and had just finished his fourth year in the ministry. As to his usefulness to church and country in the forty years of unexampled toils succeeding the hour of holy consecration, when, by the imposition of the hands of Bishop Janes, he received authority to preach the word, and administer the sacraments in the church of God, in the office of an elder, these pages will but partly inform the reader. But "his record is on high;" yea, it is upon the earth also. The memory of his name, and that of his works, is filled away in the Texan heart. The outgoing and the incoming generations will mention his long useful life with

feelings of delight, and talk of his departure with those of regret, because he is gone. To print in a book all he has written, in forty years, would make a volume of unmanageable dimensions, and to tell of all his work in Texas would fill a library alone. He was full of activities; he could not be still: could not be idle. "Never be triflingly employed" was one of the cardinal rules of his life. He must be doing something of utility. Neither was he an "eleventh hour" laborer. He began in life's early morn; at the age of twenty-two years he began his life-long mission. He did a full day's work, and the vast harvest fruit of his toil is now being gathered by those that come after him. But that great Texan field shall continue to produce and reproduce enlarging harvests of "the good seed" sown "into good ground" until the angel reapers shall thrust in their sickles to garner the final harvest of the church into the granaries of Mount Zion—"City of the living God." Good deeds, like the rippling wave, never die till laving every shore.

HIS EDUCATION.

His early advantages for gaining a knowledge of books were not large. He began to learn the saddler's trade in early boyhood, and we hear of him faithfully following it in Mansfield, Ohio, in 1836. We also learn of his entering Augusta College, on the Ohio river, in 1839; and, also, that he entered the Ohio Annual Conference in 1840. He could not then have had more than fairly begun a college course in that little period of time. He then, as most Methodist preachers do, must have entered Conference without the finish of a collegiate education; yet, it is evident that he had a respectable knowledge of books—of history and of the laws of language. He made good use of his short college term. He, too, continued his studies to the end of life. When he died, his mind was a store house filled with every variety of facts and truths, which he had gathered from

nature, art, science, the Bible, history, and all other forms of human learning; a man of safe judgment in questions involving the interest of Church or State. He was noted as an accurate surveyor. He has laid off a number of the late towns in the far West. Among his papers I find a commission from the State of Texas for coroner of Bexar county, in which the novel city of this age is located—San Antonio. He has been agent for the American Bible Society: agent and curator of Georgetown University; several times President *pro tem* of the Annual Conference: a member of the General Conference; Presiding Elder of the great German field in Texas, and also of several American districts. No man without ability and great force of character could have filled all these posts with acceptability and profit as he did. In all of them, he went in and out before his brethren in honor: and, at last, laid down upon his broad shield robed in more than Spartan glory.

He spoke fluently, and wrote with readiness in the English and in the German languages. I find among his papers two sermons written in German, which I propose to print in this book for the reading of the Teutonic population of Texas and elsewhere. He could also converse in the Spanish tongue; not so easily, however, as in the German.

Considering the bookless condition of this vast border land in early times, the amount of time spent in travel, and the variety of work he had to perform to supplement his meager receipts, it is more than surprising to see how he gained valuable information. The will makes the way. He adopted the Pauline motto: "Whatsoever your hands find to do, do with your might." He shunned no work needful to be done. Paul made tents to pay board, when his salary was small; and our deceased brother used his compass, stitched on saddles and harness, or taught school, when his table was barren. But see him erecting a pulpit, and constructing benches to seat his congregation, in San Antonio, in 1846. He was sent to San Antonio in Decemcer,

1845, but did not reach the work till 1846. In all these temporal things he was truly a modern Paul. Truly does the boy outline the man. Behold him at Augusta College! He seeks no costly boarding house; but he and his comrade rent a cheap private room, and "bach it," living on corn bread, bacon and molasses. The Holy Spirit called out the right man for early Texan life, when He moved the heart of young DeVilbiss to volunteer as missionary to the Republic of Texas. At the time he and his comrade began their mission in its vast domain, settlements were few and far apart: and the border was infested with marauding bands of Mexicans and depredating Indians: wild beasts, wolves and reptiles were to be found in great numbers. The living streams of water were bridgeless, few ferry boats, and no steam or sail vessels, except near the coast upon the tide waters of the greatest rivers. Though not noted for their great width, those streams were deep and of rapid flow. They were crossed by wading, fording, or upon rafts mostly. Fords were few, and often boggy to man and beasts, from soft mud or quicksands along the banks. No easy methods of travel over the unpathed plains of the unpeopled Republic. But the generous hospitality of the pioneers squatted along the timbers hugging in their quickly dashing rivers, was as free as the limpid waters hastening down their channels to freshen the briny wave. Our departed brother says he never saw a house without a floor overhead until he crossed the Sabine. Indeed, it seemed strange to him. The free welcome to Texan hospitality was shared, in pioneer times, in tents, or cabins overspread often with leaky roofing. But when no human habitation could be reached before nightfall, the traveler must partake of the hospitality of the wilderness alone, pillowing his head, not like Jacob, upon a stone, but his saddle, and covering his dew-sprinkled body with the star-lit concave. In fact, in that perilous time, everybody was glad to see everybody, and so seldom was

the loneliness disturbed by the visit of friends, or the coming of a stranger, that they were glad to see even a friendly dog trot up.

There were then really no church houses, and few school houses. The preaching and other forms of worship were had in school cabins, in private rooms, or in the shading groves.

We now clearly see that the young man that rented a cheap private room at a great college to obtain an education, at the same time preparing his own meals of flesh, bread and molasses, was the young missionary for that young Republic. God makes no mistakes in calling men for His work.

JOHN WESLEY DEVILBISS AND ANDREW JACKSON POTTER.

The west Texas Conference has only one Potter, never had more than one DeVilbiss. They were antipodes. Potter is ruddy, robust, pugilistic and dauntless. He carried two kinds of gospel with him: the Bible and his fire-arms. When he preached the Bible gospel unto the people, and any of them were disorderly, he pelted them with his fist, or scattered them by the terror of his arms. DeVilbiss was fair, stoutly built and non-pugilistic. He had only one gospel. His Bible, hymn book and discipline were all the visible implements of his warfare. He was a man of peace. For more than a decade Potter led the van along the dangerous borders, often passing within the range of the Indian's arrow, or his leaden bullets, but never hurt. But DeVilbiss was often near the track of the savage, and sometimes they crossed his path behind him, but never came in contact with him. DeVilbiss has fallen but Potter is still in the field far out upon the frontier.

It would now be difficult for one to find a place in broad Texas where DeVilbiss has not left his footprint. From the bank of the Sabine to the eastern shore of the Rio Brazo Del Norte, and from the shelly beach, washed

by the Gulf's blue waves, to a region far out among the western mountains, bordering the wilderness, where, to day, the untutored savage roams in the face of the Rocky Mountains, his busy hands have planted cuttings of the Vineyard of the Lord.

CHARACTER OF HIS MINISTRY.

He was the "Carvosso" of Texas. A "revivalist." One of vital force and great power in the day of his prime. His thoughts were clear and usually flowed rapidly in the pulpit. His manner was warm, forcible and urgent. He always displayed earnestness and zeal in dispensing God's word to men. He was unusually gifted in prayer; more successful, sometimes, in prayer than in preaching. His mighty supplications often struck the wicked with terror; so alarming, that they either were led to reformation, or made to flee from the place—his prayers being as terrific to them as Potter's fire arms. He was gifted, too, in song. All Texas has been vocal with the melody of his charming music. He has preached, prayed, exhorted, sung and shouted all over Texas. He has rejoiced with the happy and mourned with the sorrowing. He has comforted the mourner at the altar, and shed tears over the impenitence of sinners.

QUALITY OF HIS SPIRIT.

He was truly affectionate and kind to all people. He had no ugly word to say about anyone; ever cheerful and happy, he always met an open door and hearty welcome into cabin and mansion. He did not allow himself to suspicion or distrust his fellow men, unless the evidence was at hand and convincing. He treated all men as his brethren, and manifested a religious concern alike for the souls of all grades and nationalities of his fellows. With such feelings dominating his own heart, he could but realize a cordial welcome everywhere. He made himself at home in the hovels of the poor and in the parlors of the rich.

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Some have said that his merry cheerfulness was not perpetual; that some times he was sad—desponding; but that is the wrong word. Life is not all sunshine to any man; it is best it should not be. Lights and shadows make up the scene of human life. Man cannot live always upon the mountain; he has much to do in the vales, and must come down into them. Warm and zealous hearts, under exciting influences, are elevated above the sphere where the spirits of the non-enthusiastic move; and when their raptures calm, and they again mingle with the common temperature of men, they are not, therefore, despondent. Despondency means too much; it implies a weakness, if not a loss of faith, in the ultimate success of the cause about which we despond. Sorrowful regret, is the true phrase in the case of our departed brother.

Desponding gloom hung no shadow over the face of his religious life. He toiled for some immediate results of good, with a strong faith and a vehement zeal, and when no croppings of present good appeared, he was penetrated with a deep sense of sorrow and regret, because men rejected the blessed message of mercy he was divinely commissioned to tender them. A like feeling made the Son of God lament and weep in view of the coming ruin of the city of the great king. Such regretful feelings will make us seem sad when, indeed, that sadness is not the result of the failure of our own faith or the obscurity of our hope of heaven, but the fruit of a failure of manifest good results of our plans and works proposing blessings to those among whom we are sent to minister.

THE DOMINANT SPIRIT MOVING HIM AND HIS COMRADE, REV. H. S. THRALL, TO ACCEPT A MISSION TO TEXAS.

Kind reader, be patient and allow me to lead you backward along the path of time forty-three years, and let us stop in Hamilton, Ohio, where a session of an annual conference is being held. Behold two young men standing

before the altar, while a venerable old bishop is telling them about life-long vows into which they are about to enter. One of them is John Wesley DeVilbiss and the other Homer S. Thrall. Both of them have just finished their second year in the intinerant ministry, and are now entitled to Deacon's orders in the church of their choice. Bishop Morris lays his hands upon their youthful heads, and says: "Take thou authority to read the Holy Scriptures in the Church of God, and to preach the same." They now arise from their knees before the altar, with vows of holy consecration upon them, which they can lay down only at the portal of their tombs. While the fresh unction of those pledges are upon them, they volunteer to go as missionaries to the Republic of Texas, a foreign and simi-savage land.

Now, dear reader, let us examine these consecrated young men minutely. Look at the country they are leaving forever; see the one to which they go. Inspect the motives; find out the dominant spirit that moves them to exchange country and friends, and let more than forty years of their after-life reveal their inward purposes and ultimate hopes.

The enterprises which employed their time and energies, when they reached their new home, bear testimony as to their ruling motives. All the varieties in the catalogue of motives which control and determine the careers of men in this world may be reduced to three classes: Ambition for fame and honor; avarice for gain and fortune, and a love of pleasure. None of these have any place in the hearts or plans of our youthful missionaries. They display no intention to seek earthly fame or honors. They enter into no enterprizes looking to the acquisition of lands or property of any kind. They mingle not with the scenes of amusements and pleasure; but they at once begin the work of their mission—they preach the Gospel. To preach Jesus and the resurrection was the object of their mission to the new Republic. Other men came from almost all parts of the

earth, but not to preach. Other earthly motives led them there.

Now, patient reader, let us retrospect and reason a little upon mentioned facts. Those facts warrant the conclusion that these consecrated youths had in them an element not possessed by the common herd of men; an element not the product of nature, not an acquisition of education, but a divine element—a bestowment—a divine gift. Called of God to their life long mission, and endowed with gifts, and a love for the work. A learned young missionary in the Roman Empire more than eighteen hundred years ago, tells it well. Listen at his explanations. "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel." "The love of Christ constraineth us." "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." No combination of language can excel those brief sentences. God calls his ministers to His work. That call may not be unheeded with impunity. "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel;" His gifts qualify and move them to the work. "The love of Christ constraineth us"—leadeth us into, and sustaineth us in the field of toil. God is the author of all our gifts and graces. "The love of God," not *imputed* unto us, as the Antinomians would teach, but, "shed in our hearts": put into our hearts *really*, the agent that plants it therein:" by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Here is a divine element put into man, giving him a new life, filling him with holy impulses, and immortal hopes. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Christ's love for man brought him as a missionary to earth, to save man. That same spirit of love he puts into the preacher's heart. It is Christ's love for sinners, planted in the preacher's heart that leads him on in his grand mission.

Dr. Fitzgerald, editor of the Nashville Christian Advocate, says that, "religion puts a divine element in men." Dr. John Matthews implies the same sentiment when he says that there is but one way for man to get rid of the

Decalogue, and that is, to do nothing it interdicts, and to do all it enjoins to be done. But how can fallen man do all that? He tells us. Pray God that His spirit may put into our hearts a desire to do all it commands, and a distaste for all that is forbidden. Here the Doctor's lead-line reached bottom facts. Jesus taught the same imperishable truth, when he said, "ye must be born again."

When young DeVilbiss was converted at the Rocky Run camp-meeting near Tiffin, Ohio, in 1833, he was a boy in his fifteenth year, fifty-two years ago. Then and there he received a baptismal unction which changed his moral nature, and directed his course in all after life. His gift of love, and its zealous flame, abated not in the roll of fifty-two years. His lamp was ever trimmed and burning till the angel sentinel took it into his hand at the portal of mortality.

Often in the history of our ministerial life of forty-four years, when poverty pressed us down, worldly minded men, and nominal laymen have said unto us. "If I were you I would not preach to the people unless they made better provisions for me and my family." If that proposition be reversed it is true. Reversed, it means this: "if you were I, preacher," that is, if the same class of feelings I possess were in the preacher's heart, he would cease to serve a people that failed to supply his temporal wants. But, thank God! that class of feelings has no place in a true preacher's heart. Possessed with such, he never would have started in the generous work. A secular ministry can not endure the hardships of poverty. If all men had the same views and feelings about preaching, there would be no preachers. But the preacher has a call and a mission that other men have not. Divinely called, divinely moved, he will "go." Go in the presence of great sacrifice; go in the face of toil and danger; go in view of poverty and want: go over States, nations, and continents: go to the islands of the deep seas: go everywhere—"into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," "till earth's remotest nation has learned

Messiah's name." God will furnish men to preach in all coming ages, till the earth is filled with a knowledge of salvation. God selects them, not the church. He sees not as men see. He finds them in all ranks, grades, conditions, trades and professions of life. John Wesley DeVilbiss was taken from a saddler's shop in the twenty-second year of his age. God made of him a workman of whom his adopted country is proud to day.

HE LIVED TO SEE THE FRUIT OF HIS WORK.

When he crossed the Sabine in 1843, he found a new world, spreading out almost a thousand miles every way, inhabited by only a few really civilized people. Only a few Protestant brethren had entered the uncultivated land before him and his little band. A small Annual Conference had been organized and a small number of laymen had been collected into diminutive classes in the towns and in the thickest settlements. But these earnest men, full of faith, and a zeal enkindled by the Holy Ghost, went to the work of their calling, and sowed the good seed of the Word everywhere they went; nothing stopped them.

Soon the world of mankind began to migrate to Texas. Annexation opened the migratory gates to the nations. People came, of all climes and tribes; the roads were opened; towns sprang up; merchants and tradesmen opened up their goods and wares for sale; the banks came; schools, colleges and churches rose up like magic; the printing press came; the railroads came; the little and great rivers were bridged; the telegraph came, and the telephone, like a spider's web, stretches its wiry meshes overhead, along the streets of town and city. Our missionary band all the while received additions to its aggressive numbers, until now the church it served has seven Annual Conferences: five American, one German and one Mexican; with one hundred thousand communicants. These men planted the acorn and lived to see it grow into the great oak; they

planted a vineyard, and beheld the beginning of the vintage; they sowed the good seed and witnessed its yellowing for the reaper's sickle.

In the midst of these tokens of success John Wesley DeVilbiss fell, clothed with the honors of his Church and country, and the glory of his Divine Master. But his fellow laborer is still in the field traveling a great district, reaching from San Antonio to the silver-bosomed river marking the geographical line between the two Republics. But that natural boundry does not limit the dominion of the Church; it is pushing on its conquest to the Pacific wave. God carries on his work, though His workmen fall. Oh, what prophetic eye can see the glory that is to enrobe the earth in the next Centenary of American Methodism? Millions unborn shall see it! Oh! happy, happy day!

RESPONSIBILITY OF THOSE THAT COME AFTER HIM.

At the last judgment the judge may place the two missionaries, DeVilbiss and Thrall, into the scales of judgment at the same time, each in opposite ends thereof, to balance their mutual merits and privileges; but when those who enter into their cultivated field now step into one end of that scale, an arch-angel is to stand in the other. Oh, ye young men! who take the places of these fallen and falling veterans of the pulpit, we almost covet your glory, but we dread your responsibilities. They will be measured by your opportunities. No perfunctory ministrations can complete the work these veterans have begun. You must preach the Gospel under the light and powers of the Holy Ghost. No stale methods of presenting God's word to dying men will meet their religious wants. No studied manner of conforming pulpit efforts to the rules of oratory will win the sinner's heart for Christ! Religion must be planted, not only in the intellects of men, but also in their hearts; they must be made to feel, as well as see, that they are sinners. Truth must be preached into their sensibilities.

Unaided by the Holy Ghost, you will fail to reach the heart. At the Pentecost Peter preached with the might of the Holy Ghost upon him, and men were cut to the heart. Not man's *reason*, but his *heart* needs *regeneration*. The heart is the nest where all sin is hatched. Reason wants religious instruction; the heart must be fired up to action. No forms, or styles of human eloquence, can enkindle that fire in the heart. The fire of the Holy Ghost alone can move the sinner; its hallowed flame must first illumine the preacher's heart and inflame his zeal. Whatever else the preacher may possess, if he has not the Holy Spirit with him and in him, he is unfit for the holy work of the pulpit.

Knowledge is needed; yea, much knowledge is needful; but the indwelling divine spirit must sanctify and utilize it to sacred ends. Facilities for obtaining information are extensive and universal, everywhere, on all subjects; the land is flooded with information for all men, and the opportunities for reading and reflection are larger to the preacher than to most men. The duties of slow and painful travel are greatly reduced; the preacher's field of labor is so circumscribed, and the methods of travel so rapid, that he has much time to read and think. If faithful, and industrious, he must grow wise in all matters of human learning; if idle and indifferent, God will leave him in his folly, and at the judgment the balances will show his lightness. The ministry of the incoming ages must be extensive in learning and supernatural in power, to warrant success. It must nstruct the nations, and impress them with the fact that God is in the preacher, approving his message; that religion is not confined to correct doctrinal creeds and imposing ceremonials, but that its *realty* consists in a divine element put in the heart—regeneration—being born of God.

HIS LAST PREACHING.

We have made little use of his journals, covering a period of thirty years, because of their extensiveness and great variety, a notice which would have made a large

volume. But now we quote his own language from his last journal of the last two months of his life. We think it due the reader, and the friends and dear ones he leaves upon earth, to let him tell them how he suffered and how he bore it all by the grace of God.

We begin at the sale of his home on the Madina river, fifteen miles from San Antonio. Under that contract, we learn that his widow was to give possession of the homestead to the purchaser April 1, 1885. He was a great sufferer indeed.

Here we quote from his journal :

October 1st, 1884: Sick to day, could not work at any thing ; Mrs. Hofman came to-day to buy my place. On 3d, 4th, 5th, and 6th, sick all day and in bed. 7th, still sick. 8th, some better. 10th, quite sick all day. 15th and 16th, quite sick, severe attack of pain in my chest. 17th and 18th, repaired buggy wheel ; much improved; Oh, Lord, help me to be thankful for every improvement in health ; Mrs. Hofman bargained for my place. 19th, went to Sunday school; feel calm and peaceful to-night. 21st, feel quite well to-day. 22d, worked in the shop most of the day ; feel quite well; Oh, Lord, I will praise Thee for Thy great goodness to me. 26th, feel calm and peaceful. 27th, worked some at various small jobs ; made preparations for a trip to Conference ; [that Conference was held in San Antonio, October 29th, and it was his last session.—COMP.] 28th, my daughter took me to the stage stand, and at 10 o'clock, p. m., I left in the stage for San Antonio, and arrived at 4 p. m., and put up at 251 East Commerce street, with Robert E. Cummings. 29th, Conference opened, and continued from day to day till Monday evening, November 3d; a most pleasant session. The love feast Sunday morning was a glorious time. My soul was greatly blessed; Oh, Lord, keep me by Thy power faithful to the end of life!

November 4th, came home ; went to the polls and voted ; returned home; feel worn and feeble. 5th, at home all

day, resting and reading McTyeire's History of Methodism. 6th, at home reading McTyeire's history. 7th, Mrs. Hofman came to-day and remained over night: sold my farm to her and fixed up the papers. 9th, at home reading McTyeire's history; it is a great treat to me. 10th, at home reading McTyeire. 11th, read McTyeire all day. 12th, read McTyeire until noon. 13th, quite sick to-day. 14th, finished reading McTyeire; this book has been a great blessing to me. 15th, have been quite sick to-day; Oh, for grace to sustain me in my afflictions; I feel a strong faith in God that all things will work together for our good if we will only trust in Him. 17th, assisted in hauling wood to-day, which occupied most of the day; am quite unwell in the evening. 18th, at home feeling quite feeble: I want patience to endure as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 19th, at home, still very sick; sat about the house all day; Oh, how tedious the hours pass. 20th, 21st, sat about the house: O, God! give me grace to bear these afflictions; I am very weak; O, my Lord! I commit my way unto Thee: Thou alone canst give me strength and grace for my day and trial. 22d, sick in bed. 25th, Some better to-day: the Lord be praised! 26th, quite sick to-day: Oh, how tedious the time goes; sitting and lying down all day is hard work for me. 27th, feel better to-day; assisted wife in hauling wood; quite sick in the evening. 28th, have felt better to-day; fixed rollers to a bedstead, and finished a cart for my little afflicted grand-son. 29th, have felt much better to-day, and worked in the shop until evening; God help me to praise Thee for improving health! 30th, this day closes another month; spent the day at home; read the Bible and Harper's Weekly; my mind has been too much taken up in politics; Oh, God! forgive me and help me to love Thee more, and serve Thee better.

December 1st, a beautiful day; feel much improved; wrote up my business with Mrs. Hofman; bless the Lord, Oh,

my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name! 2nd, went to San Antonio 5th, feel feeble to-day; sat around the house all day; Oh, that I may have patience to bear this confinement to the house. 6th, beautiful day; have a severe attack of pain in my chest; feel better; Lord help me to praise Thee for Thy great goodness to me! 10th, this is the anniversary of my arrival in Texas; forty-two years ago to-day I crossed the Sabine at Gains' ferry, and set foot on Texas soil! Oh, how good the Lord has been to me, lo! these many years; all who came with me have passed away, except Brother Thrall: he still lives and works: he is now at the Centennial Conference at Baltimore, if alive and well; I linger in feebleness, and often in pain: may the grace of God be sufficient for me every day: to day is, also, the anniversary of the death of my father: fifty-three years ago he left this world. 11th, exercised a good deal to-day, feel much better; a good rain; the Lord be praised for His goodness and mercy to men. 12th, quite well: worked in the shop untill evening; I am grateful for as much comfort as I have enjoyed to-day. 13th, worked to-day, making trinkets—"a Christmas tree:" feel quite well. 14th, attended the sanctuary to-day; heard a good plain sermon from Brother Seale: how pleasant to meet in God's house once more! I am unusually well to-day; Oh, God! I will praise Thee for Thy great goodness to me: I will trust Thee for all things. 21st, went to the school house to hear a Baptist preacher; he did not come, and I tried to preach, and had some liberty. 28th, very sick: better in the afternoon. 31st, last day in the year; Oh, how good and gracious God has been to me and mine! Oh, Lord, give me grace to live more faithfully!

January 1st, this was the last month of his earthly life; on its last day he ceased to suffer. We quote from his journal of that day the following:

Oh, that I could have grace to be more patient and faith-

ful to God; I am so inclined to impatience, and even petulance; Oh, Lord, deliver me in Thy mercy!

"Should pain or my weak flesh prevail,
With lamb-like meekness arm my breast,
Should grief my wounded soul assail,
In lowly patience may I rest."

2nd, quite sick again; sat by the fire all day. 3rd, sick still, all day; Lord, give me resignation to the Divine will! 5th, very sick, weak, and feel cast down, but not destroyed; Oh, that I could trust God more fully in all things!

"Weaker than a bruised reed,
Help I every moment need."

6th, quite sick; in the house all day; feel cast down; Oh, Lord, help me! 7th, health declining; Oh, Lord, give me grace to bear all! 8th, better to-day; when I have signs of improving, how I am lifted up; Lord, keep me from despondency, and help me to maintain my faith and patience in my darkest hours of pain! 13th, feel tolerable well to-day; exercised some in bringing wood, and other work. 17th, changed medicine to-day; hope it may have a good effect; Oh, that I could look more to God for relief from pain! 22d, quite sick; feel calm and resigned to the Divine will. 29th, went to San Antonio and returned, and feel very tired. 30th, wife's birth-day, and we had a Plymouth Rock chicken-pie; took some exercise; feel better to-day, except that my feet are much swollen; want to repair my chimney to-morrow, if the day suits at all and I am able.

That is the last paragraph his pen ever wrote. The fatal to-morrow came, and he repaired the chimney. It was too much for his wasted strength. "He ceased at once to work and live."

CHAPTER X.

The following chapter is from the pen of the Rev. Buckner Harris, Pastor of the San Marcos Station, in the West Texas Conference. He was long an intimate friend of the man of whom he writes. He has given a faithful and true portrayal of the traits in the character of his friend. We must say that it is so rich in the merit of concise statement of facts, that we gladly welcome it to a place in the book narrating events of his wonderful ministerial life in Texas, and revealing to the reader a picture of the vital elements in the social, moral and religious character of the man.

As Brother Harris correctly states, he was a man of delicate modesty. Always neat and tidy in his dress and person ; intemperate, or excessive in abundant labors, and often reckless exposure to flood rains, summer heat, and the chilling cold of terrible Texan northers. Having an unusual hardy manhood, he did not realize that it could be over-taxed until the deed was done. That indeed was a fault, but a pardonable one. Had he husbanded his health in youth and the prime of manhood, his wisdom and counsel might still bless the church he loved. Let the younger brethren who survive him, profit by the result of his excessive toils.

In his journals our deceased brother, in reflective moments, sometimes censured himself for what he termed defective financiering ; not of his giving, but of too little attention to temporal things, and confiding too much in the pledges of other men. Truly was he unsuspecting and confiding. But as to his attending to and managing home interest to profitable results, how was it possible, when he was so little at home ? His ministerial work was mostly away from his home, and in his long absence, home matters devolved upon other hands.

The world seems to think that poverty is the estate of a minister of Jesus, and if he is careful about earthly things, it is registered to the discredit of his piety, or his devotedness to his sacred calling. The same world demands of the preacher that he shall appear in public, clad in quite respectable attire, many of whom contribute nothing to aid him in procuring suitable apparel, or to furnish his larder at home.

Our dear departed brother made all temporal interests subserve the duties his great mission imposed upon him. He was not rich in earthly goods when he died, yet he was not destitute. He left a little home, or an equivalent, to his bereaved widow, which many other itinerants have not done. His treasure is in the fadeless, the sinless heaven. An excess in anything is a fault, and ministers of religion should, as far as

ministerial duties will allow, look after the perishable, providing for honest things in the sight of all men, that the gospel be not blamed.

In religious zeal and usefulness, he exceeded his compeers. Indeed shall he be missed in the advancing ranks below, but he answers to roll call in heaven. "After Life's fitful fever he sleeps well."

It was my good fortune to know Rev. J. W. DeVilbiss for a quarter of a century, and to enjoy his most intimate companionship at different times during this long period. I knew his character and often saw him during my boyhood, long before I knew him personally. I learned to appreciate him from the first, and my estimate of the man grew with years of association and fellowship in the ministry of the gospel. The facts and incidents of his long and useful life may be learned by the reader from the biography now before him. By request, I write simply to pay my tribute to the memory of a man we all loved, and to whom the Church of Texas is as much indebted as perhaps to any man who ever labored in this great field. Some traits of his character I will refer to as designed to convey to the reader some impression of the man. He was generous, guileless, unsuspecting and self-sacrificing to the cause of his Redeemer. He gave of his means to the cause of God, and to all who were in need, and his giving was generally to the full extent of his purse. If he had no cash on hand he would consider his resources for the future, and sign his name for an amount to be paid when he was able. He always met his obligations to the church, and he loved to give, and so freely did he give, that we were often reminded of the widow who cast in all her living. He felt that God loved a cheerful giver, and that he and his family would be provided for though he gave all he had.

I believe that Brother DeVilbiss would have desired that a biography of him should be true to him in every particular, and that his faults as well as his virtues should be known. Only by this species of biography can we learn all the lessons his useful life would teach us. His errors and faults were those of a good man, and yet of a man of

like passions and infirmities with ourselves. I knew him well, and I can say that the beautiful simplicity and truthfulness of his character were manifested even by his errors and failings. Some men's faults are more to be tolerated than some men's virtues. Every man has his faults, and Brother DeVilbiss was the last man to plead exemption from the imperfections of humanity.

I thought that he was too indifferent to his own personal interests, and to a certain degree improvident in the use of his earthly goods. This failing in him, however, was due to a great virtue carried to excess. He did not think of himself, but of the great sinful world to which he was sent by that Saviour who gave his life, a ransom for all. I often thought that he unnecessarily exposed himself to hardship and inclement weather, and that in the discharge of the duties of his calling often did more work than was strictly necessary. He had a superabundance of energy, and whatever he took in hand he did thoroughly and well. But in the prosecution of his work he took but little care of his health, and but for one of the best physical constitutions would have broken down long before he did. Bishop Marvin prized those preachers who attended to all their duties, small and great, and I once heard him, in open Conference, say, "That in confiding a certain work to Brother DeVilbiss he knew it would be attended to, for he never neglected anything: and when anything was committed to him to do, he would never rest until it was off his hands, and well done."

I have slept in the same room with him, when he would anticipate the duties of the morrow. He would be restless during the night, up and down several times, at dawn would be dressed and ready for the task before him. As years grew upon him, his life seemed to acquire a momentum which grew to dimensions that were beyond his control, and after the approaches of age were upon him, overtaxed his nerves and waning strength. He worked to the last:

he could not help it. To be still was next to impossible. It was his desire to cease at once to work and live.

Brother DeVilbiss was a man of settled and life-long convictions, consistent and true to his calling. To those who knew his stern integrity and uniformly consistent christian character, this last remark may appear trite and unnecessary; but we emphasize it in view of the fact, that, owing to his confiding disposition and consequent liability to be deceived by designing men, some persons thought him at times inconsistent in minor things. He would sometimes err through misrepresentations and expressions of others, when his own independent judgment would have led him to a safe and correct conclusion. When convinced of an error, I never knew a man more ready to acknowledge it. Socially, he was agreeable and pleasant, with fine conversational powers, a good listener, instructive and entertaining to his company. It was a most pleasant privilege to be with him and converse with him on different subjects, especially upon religion, of which his heart and mind were full. A more brotherly or companionable man I never knew. It so happened some years since, before the era of railroads in Texas, that we journeyed together for several hundred miles, and had each other's society for a fortnight. He was interesting, entertaining throughout. He had an inexhaustible fund of instructive incidents and amusing anecdotes, and he made me forget the long journey over the prairies and the tedium of slow travel and delay. With his brethren he was at times given to anecdote, and he had seen so much of life, characters good, bad and indifferent, had a sense of the ludicrous so strong and acute, that in telling the amusing and mirthful incidents witnessed in his long life, he was inimitable. He was at times, himself, the subject of the ludicrous, especially when absorbed in work, and many a hearty laugh have we had at his expense.

His education, though incomplete, was thorough and liberal. So far as his studies in youth had been pursued, they

were thoroughly mastered. He could not tolerate half done work. What a man attempts to do let him do it thoroughly and well or not at all, was his view of duty. He had in him the elements of an able and successful minister of the gospel had he developed them as he should have done. Perhaps this remark is too strong, for if he had been a far better and more powerful preacher than he was, and which he undoubtedly could have been, would he have been the same successful and useful man we all know so well, and in whom we all confided as a leader of the militant hosts? God only knows. There are differences of administration, but the same Lord, and perhaps it was best that he should develop as he did. One cause why he never attained to his full measure of strength as a preacher was his diffidence. I heard him once make a comparative failure, caused solely by the presence of some preachers and others, whom he thought were able and perhaps disposed to criticise him, and he seemed to lose confidence in himself. When absorbed in his subject he seemed to forget surrounding circumstances and would preach a sermon worthy of any minister of Jesus Christ. Another cause was that his restless activity seemed to superinduce a nervous excitability, inconsistent with close application and study of a subject. His power of analysis was excellent, his memory retentive of every thing he ever saw, heard or read, and by applying his mind to the conception and digestion of a gospel theme, he could have produced sermons that would have done honor to the pulpit, and would have given to his congregations enlarged and accurate views of divine truth. In exhortation and prayer he was able and effective. Few men could excel him in powerful exhortation to his fellowmen to flee the wrath to come and be saved from their sins. His prayers in our Conference sessions and among the people will not be forgotten until those who heard them are no more on the earth.

How we will miss him at our annual session of Con-

ference! In all the business of the Conference, he was to the last our most trusted and effective member. He was perfect master of all the details of Conference business. His counsels in committee and speeches on the Conference floor will be remembered by his brethren. Here the wisdom, the consecration and unselfish devotion of the man were manifest to all. He was a noble, generous-hearted Methodist preacher. He gave himself no concern about his appointment. Bishops had no trouble with his case. He refrained from using any influence or even suggestion as to his field of labor. He had the true itinerant spirit. Brother DeVilbiss enjoyed the religious life in its fullness and upon a plane high and lifted above many of its types, as we witness it in the church of this and other days. It seems to my mind that his conception and realization of the christian life were genuine, healthful, inspiring and true to the gospel ideal. He was born into the religious life, if not at Pentecost, yet in the true spirit of the day, when Peter preached and three thousand were added to the church. He was full of faith and the Holy Ghost. Oh! that the religion of Christ, according to the type of it that he felt in his soul, may reign in the church he loved and served so well. Grand old man he was as he stood before us full of the power of God by faith in the atoning Saviour.

His death seems to us all a translation. He died as he desired to die. He is not, for God has taken him. His works do follow him, and we will not know all that he did for his Master until we meet him above and read the records on high.

CHAPTER XI.

CAUSES OF EXPOSURE AND DANGER IN EARLY TEXAN TRAVEL.

If the reader will be patient, we will write a short chapter on the causes of hardship and hazards in an early itinerant life in this western land—the causes of exposure referred to in the chapter written by Rev. Buckner Harris, and slightly mentioned in the preceding pages. It was exposure to these causes that diseased and prematurely broke down the noble, natural constitution of our departed missionary. True, he was a man of vehement zeal in the pulpit and altar, but it was not excess of zeal that wasted his physical life-forces. His zeal was not strained or forced: it was the natural outflow of an animated soul. Natural as the down-flow of the waters of Niagara, or the outbeaming of the sun's rays. He never strained his voice, or greatly agitated his jestures; yet his ideas and words came rapidly, and were uttered with great and impressive force. Such spirited utterances do not damage the speaker; they are healthful. It is the forced labor in the pulpit that inflames and debilitates the vital organs. Assumed zeal took no part in the untimely superannuation of our sainted brother. It was exposure in travel over this western empire, in early and later times, for it is but recently that Texas has had any easy methods of travel—vehicles and railroad trains. Until quite lately the commerce of the State was transported upon mule and ox wagons: and travel was upon mustang ponies, with provision packs upupon jacks or jennets; and, until within a few years, the circuits and districts extended over vast areas of territory. In traveling the preacher was unavoidably, at times, greatly exposed to the rigors of the seasons. It was not the lot of Brother DeVilbiss to be limited to the narrow sphere of a

station, nor did he desire it. It would not have suited his unpent spirit. The world was his parish in feeling, and the race was alone the limit of his mission. His benevolent heart was as large as all out-doors. To have restricted him to the little circle of stations, would have been like confining the rays of the sun to one little planet. His commission said, "Go," and he went. When agent for Georgetown University, his field included all of the vast area of Texas; and when agent for the American Bible Society his sphere of work was all the great west; and when upon the German district, it extended from the Sabine to the Rio Grande; and when upon American districts, his travel was extensive. He was, at times, almost a stranger at home. The widowed one who now moans his absence, will call to mind those days when all home interests devolved upon her skillful industry. It was the hardships attending these long, lengthened travels that hurried his later days to an end. It was one of these tedious journeys, that Brother Harris speaks of in his chapter, when he learned so much of the spirit and private character of his companion.

There are few places in the vast domain of Texas where our dear brother has left no foot-prints. In the interior, along the Gulf shores, in the western mountains, from the Mexican border to the Louisiana line, he has prayed, sung, and told the people of Jesus; and in all those regions a holy fire was enkindled that continues to burn and increase to this day.

A stranger, who has never visited Texas, can hardly form an adequate idea of the terrible causes of the hazard of travel in this open world; and for the information of such of my readers I now describe those causes. They are mainly two: Rain-floods and northers. The sparseness of early settlements rendered occasional exposure to their severity unavoidable by the traveler. The flooding rains fall annually in some portion of the State, mostly at the equinoxes and solstices; but occasionally at other seasons. But when

they do fall, they are often fearful. The vast over-arching heavens become veiled in angry black clouds, whose muffling folds seem to pass close to the bosom of the open prairie. Peals of thunder rend the clouds, jar the earth and tremble the pillars of the skies, while occasional zigzag streams of electricity leap from the bosom of the storm and smite the face of the earth, and almost incessant sheens of lightning illumine the darkness, as if intent upon setting the universe on fire; meanwhile the rushing winds howl and sweep over city, village and country home and lone prairies; the dashing rain, driven by gale-winds, falls in floods and liquid sheets. In a few hours every little ravine and dry creek floods its valleys, and carries off everything in its path—fencing, stock and houses. See the missionary traveler asleep in the fearful night upon the bosom of the wide, lone prairie. His head pillowed upon his saddle, his saddle blanket is his feather-bed, and his gray blanket is his only covering. There he lies while the tempest rages, and all nature's powerful elements combat each other. No chance for retreat to shelter. Drenched and chilled, he must shiver and endure until the coming of the welcome morn, if life's energies can sustain until the dawn. Some have perished ere the day-beams gilded the eastern face of the tempest. In the long run of forty years the two young missionaries to the Republic of Texas must have, unprotected, encountered the terror of these rain-floods. It was after one of these floods that they unsaddled and pushed their horses into the swollen stream, and crawled across upon a log, with their saddles strapped upon their backs.

This compiler came near losing his life in one of those rain storms from the North. It was during the late war. A company was enroute to Mexico, in ox wagons, loaded with cotton, to purchase supplies. It was in the unpeopled "waste-howling wilderness" between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. We had camped near the scrub timber of a

dry ravine. It was the last week in October. As the evening shade lay close upon the great prairie, all nature was in repose; not an aspen leaf would have trembled in the stillness; but the heat was oppressive. When all the light of day was lost in the night gloom, and total darkness covered the earth, long flashes of distant lightning would reveal a blue strip of cloud like a velvet belt stretching all along the Northern horizon, as if to bind earth and sky in one: so far away was the coming norther, no thunder could be heard. But ere long the cloud widened and advanced, and the lightning increased until it revealed the rapid approach of a night tempest, and the cry of "wet norther," was heard in the camp. Myself and comrade had made our pallet under my wagon, ladened with ten bales of cotton. About midnight the terrible norther struck us, threatening to overturn our wagon, and dashing the rain sheets upon us; and the water soon began to run under us, until we were thoroughly soaked in water on all sides. We seated ourselves side by side upon an ox yoke under the wagon, and wrapped a wet blanket around our persons, placing it over our heads, so that our warm breath should keep off the death chill from either. Five hours we sat in painful shivering, getting colder and colder, until the warm air became icy, and the rigor of the death chill seemed to seize me, and all hope was well nigh given up, when the rain ceased, and a young servant arose and kindled a fire, as the morning dawned. That timely fire saved a frail old man from a lonely grave beside that ravine, more than twenty years ago.

But the winter northers are not so often accompanied with rain, but sometimes the cold wind is so intensely cold that scarcely any animal, much less men, could live more than a few hours out upon the bleak prairie. In one of these, many soldiers froze to death on the Matagorda bay during the war. They usually succeed an intense warm spell of several hours duration, when the animal pores are open and easily chilled. They come suddenly, often in a

clear blue sky. They usually blow three days like the flow of Niagian waters. To face a severe one of them several hours and survive is almost impossible. To face a moderate one a day across an open prairie subjects even the most robust to much suffering. Many of them must have spent their force upon the stout manhood of our deceased brother in the long term of forty years, which too soon ripened him for the grave. St. Paul said truly that his ministerial labors worked *death* to him but *life* to the church.

But our sainted missionary lived to see the development of much of the life-fruit of his toils in the vineyard of his dear Master. Great cities, great churches, trained choirs, and great organs, and we may add, great people and learned preachers have sprung up and displaced old time usages. A reading and a literary audience occupy the pews of our elite cities, and a learned ministry is transported to fill the great stations. What is to be the outcome of this state and method of things, time alone can reveal. It may seem hard and unjust to the pioneers to bring in strangers to enter into the vintage of the harvest, upon which they bestowed no labors. Our chief shepherds are somewhat responsible for the growth of such a state with city churches, by granting their desires. No longer do the city churches seem to relish a plain spiritual statement of the pure word of the Lord that they may grow thereby. Pulpit oratory seems to be the craze. When learned oratory is looked to for success in the ministry of Jesus instead of divine aid, failure will inscribe itself upon the face of the pulpit. Learning is good but nothing can substitute the help of the divine one. That Holy Spirit templed in the soul, and gave life to the ministry of the man whose useful career these pages portray.

CHAPTER XII.

CURATOR OF SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY.

By Prof. S. G. Sanders.

Methodism, founded by one of the most learned men of his times, a master of arts of the ancient University of Oxford, has been distinguished, not only as a revival Church, but also in providing for the intellectual wants of its adherents. As was the case with the religious movement which resulted in the organization of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the demands of the work often necessitated the employment of men who had not enjoyed the best educational advantages, but who had gifts, were earnest, and who were moved by the Holy Ghost to the work of the ministry. But any inference from this fact that Methodism was hostile, or even indifferent, to education, would be erroneous. It finds no warrant in the early history of the Church, and a glance at the many institutions of learning now under its control is sufficient to dispel such a delusion.

In the year 1739, which is memorable as the epoch from which Methodism dates its organized existence, Mr. Whitefield laid the corner-stone of Kingswood school. This was about a month before the foundation of the first Methodist meeting-house was laid by Mr. Wesley, at Bristol. In order that the minds of the children might be "diverted as little as possible from the objects of their learning," Mr. Wesley chose a spot for this school "in the middle of Kingswood, three miles from Bristol." It is worthy of note that he bought the ground, on which it was built, with money saved from his Fellowship at Oxford. "Our first point," says Mr. Wesley, "was to answer the design of Christian education by forming their minds, through the help of God, to wisdom and holiness, by instilling the principles of true re-

ligion, speculative and practical, and training them up in the ancient way, that they might be rational, scriptural Christians."

Francis Asbury, the pioneer Bishop of American methodism, was in full sympathy with the views of Mr. Wesley on the subject of religious education. In 1780 he conferred with John Dickins, who was then in charge of the Roanoke circuit, in North Carolina, with reference to establishing a "Kingswood school in America." Mr. Dickins had been educated in London and at Eton college in England, and he is described by Bishop Asbury as "a man of great piety, great skill in learning, drinks in Greek and Latin swiftly; yet prays much, and walks close with God." They drew up a plan for a seminary, and though the Revolutionary war was in progress, some subscriptions were secured. On the arrival of Bishop Coke in America in 1784, Mr. Asbury submitted his plans to him. Bishop Coke approved them, but insisted that the institution should be a college instead of a school. The Conference of that year—the celebrated Christmas Conference, at which the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized—took measures for establishing the college, and named it Cokesbury, in honor of the two Bishops. It was located at Abingdon, in Maryland, about eighteen miles from Baltimore. Immediately after the adjournment of the Conference, the Bishops published a plan, in which the objects had in view in instituting the college were said to be: The education of the sons of ministers; the education and support of poor orphans; and "the establishment of a seminary for the children of our competent friends, where learning and religion may go hand in hand; where every advantage may be obtained which may promote the prosperity of the present life without endangering the morals and religion of the children through those temptations to which they are too much exposed in most of the public schools. This is an object of importance indeed; and here all the tenderest feelings of the parent's heart range on our

side." On June 5, 1785, Bishop Asbury laid the corner stone of the college, and, standing on its walls, preached an impressive sermon to a large concourse of people. After a successful career of ten years, the college was consumed by fire; and a year afterwards it suffered the same fate at Baltimore, where it had been reopened with good prospects of success.

Disheartened by these disasters, the friends of education in the Methodist Episcopal Church abandoned the cause for about twenty years. But soon after the second war with England, a revival of the spirit of education manifested itself in the establishment of several academies. In 1823, Augusta college, in Kentucky, was organized, and from that time to the present collegiate education has engaged the attention of the Church.

The triumph of the American over the Mexican arms at the battle of San Jacinto in 1836 opened the way for the Church to send missionaries into Texas. In 1837, Rev. Martin Ruter, D. D., responded to the call of the Missionary society, and was appointed superintendent of the mission in Texas. He entered upon his work in the autumn of that year, with Littleton Fowler and Robert Alexander as assistants. Though Dr. Reuter had received the advantages only of a common school education, and entered the itineracy at the age of sixteen, yet, by diligent study he made wonderful attainments in learning. He received the honorary degree of Master of Arts and Doctor of Divinity; served four years as president of Augusta college and resigned the presidency of Alleghany College, with its honors, attractions and comforts, to accept the appointment of missionary to Texas. Being a man of scholarly tastes and great learning, and, as a wise master-builder, knowing that the permanent success of the Church depended upon the education of the young under her own auspices, soon after his arrival Dr. Ruter devised plans for establishing a college. Though cut down by death in less than a year, his

successor, impressed by him with the importance of the work, prosecuted it to success; and in due time Ruterville college was opened under the presidency of Rev. Chauncy Richardson.

These facts demonstrate that, as in England and the Atlantic states of America, so also in Texas, the pioneers of Methodism were the ardent friends of Christian education.

Without attempting to trace further the history of education in the Methodist church in Texas, we will come at once to the movement to concentrate the resources and energies of the church upon one institution of high grade—an enterprise which Rev. John W. DeVilbiss approved in judgment and supported by his labors.

In September, 1869, Rev. F. A. Mood, D. D., began his second session as president of Soule University, Chappell Hill, Texas. The work of the session had advanced only a few weeks when the town was alarmed by the report that yellow fever had appeared at Hempstead, some seven miles distant. Chappell Hill, with other towns in that part of the State, had been decimated by this terrible disease two years before; so, naturally, a panic followed the announcement of its near approach. "Nothing could allay the alarm of the students, even after conclusive proof that the rumor was unfounded. It was in the midst of the anxiety awakened by this state of affairs that the conception resulting in the establishment of the Southwestern University had origin." A meeting of the trustees of Soule University was held in the University on Monday night, October 4th, 1869, at the call of the president of the board, Rev. R. W. Kennon. Dr. Mood presented to the board a paper setting forth the "vital importance to Southern Methodism, as well as the general interest of religion and Education in Texas, that there be an institution of learning that will by its endowments cheapen higher education, and by its other advantages secure general confidence and patronage." The work of establishing such an institution was considered too great

for any single Conference, the total membership in the five Conferences in Texas being then only about thirty thousand. After an urgent plea by its author and after careful deliberation, the paper was adopted with but one dissenting vote. It invited the annual Conferences to call an educational convention, to which should "be committed the duty of arranging for the organization, locating and endowment of a University for the Southwest, to be under the patronage and control of the Conferences of this State and such other Conferences as may hereafter desire to co-operate with them." The proposition was endorsed unanimously by the Conferences, and the convention met in Ryland Chapel, Galveston, April 20, 1870, consisting of the delegates elect to the ensuing General Conference. Its president was the venerable Robert Alexander, D. D., whose commanding form had led the Methodist hosts in Texas for a third of a century, and in whose person this movement was connected with the heroic days of the Church in the young republic. The convention decided that it would be premature to locate the proposed University, because the church had not had sufficient time to consider the grave issues involved in this question, and because sufficient opportunity had not been afforded to secure advantageous offers from different portions of the State. A name, however, was adopted, and important action was taken looking towards its location, organization and endowment. The department of instruction was arranged according to the plan inaugurated by Mr. Jefferson at the University of Virginia, whereby, instead of a fixed cirriculum, to which all are required to conform, the student is allowed to select his studies from a number of independent schools. Though several subsequent conventions were held, and the University was not located at Georgetown until August 21st, 1873, yet such in brief is its origin.

Of the three great acts of his life which Thomas Jefferson directed should be inscribed upon his tomb, the words,

"Father of the University of Virginia," form the climax. With Dr. Mood the idea of uniting the Texas Conferences upon a central university originated, and by his invincible energy this idea was made a reality. One of the wisest of the pioneer preachers told him that it was impossible to unite five Conferences upon such an enterprise, and afterwards wept for joy when it was achieved. Others regarded the plan grand in its conception and its "consummation devoutly to be wished," and while their faith was weak they placed no obstacle in the way. Still others entreated him not to sacrifice himself in leading a forlorn hope. Thus against the entreaties of friendship and prophecies of failure he entered upon this enterprise and conducted it safely through the dangers connected with the question of location, his great zeal and faith meantime inspiring confidence in others and winning friend after friend to his support. This work—the work of uniting the mind and heart of Texas Methodism upon Southwestern University, is the *magnum opus* of his life.

This enterprise found a warm and active friend in Rev. John W. DeVilbiss. He represented in part the West Texas Conference in the second Educational convention, which met at Waxahachie, April 6, 1871. He took an active part in its deliberations, and was a member of the important committee to consider the conflicting interests involved in the question of location. This question presented great difficulties, arising from the claims of rival places and impatience at delay, and a wise solution required the utmost prudence. One of the rules by which the convention was governed, provided, "that in the votes of the convention upon location the delegates vote by Conference, a majority being required to decide the question." Two of the Conferences favored immediate location, two opposed it, and the West Texas Conference was equally divided in its vote. Brother DeVilbiss thought, with Dr. Mood, that the decision of the question at that time was premature and

would be disastrous. For some twelve hours the matter was in suspense, when at length the vote of his Conference, through his earnest persuasion, was cast against location. He was appointed a member of the commission which was empowered to locate the University, and was reappointed by the convention which met at Corsicana, November 1, of the same year.

In arranging for the management of the proposed University, Bishop Keener's suggestion was adopted. He recommended the formation of two boards: a Board of Trustees, consisting of laymen, to have in charge the property and financial interests of the institution; and a Board of Curators, composed of ministers, to have supervision of its internal affairs—such as discipline, the election of professors and conferring of degrees. In the first organization of the Board of Curators, each of the patronizing Conferences was represented by one member. At the session of the West Texas Conference at Victoria, December 1872, Bishop Keener appointed Brother DeVilbiss a Curator, and as such his name appears in the charter of the University. In this office he faithfully served his Conference to the day of his death, being its only representative until 1877, when the representation of each Conference was increased to five. Of the thirteen meetings of the Curators held during his lifetime, he attended all but two, being absent from those of 1877 and 1880, at which time, however, his Conference was represented by other members. This record demonstrates his great interest in the cause of Christian education, and the fidelity with which he discharged every duty imposed upon him by the Church. Among the resolutions adopted by the Curators at the session of 1885, occurs the following: "It behooves us to cherish his memory and imitate his example in his prompt and careful and unselfish devotion to the interests of the University." In the earlier years of the University, attendance upon the meetings involved a sacrifice of time and means which he could ill afford, and more

than one hundred miles of travel by stage or private conveyance, which was a severe tax upon the strength of one advanced in years. His presence and counsels were highly prized by his brethren of the Board. They manifested their appreciation of him by electing him their president in 1883. Though in great feebleness of body he was present at the meeting in June, 1884, and on retiring from the presidency he presented to the Board a handsome gavel of his own construction, which is preserved in the University as a cherished memento of him. Several times since that meeting the lamented Regent, Dr. Mood, spoke of him in grateful and appreciative terms. He regarded his sound judgment and intimate acquaintance with the history of the University as of great value in the deliberations of the Board.

Besides his work as Curator, he was appointed one of the agents of the University for the Conference year 1875–6. His journal of that year, now in the University library, shows that he prosecuted the work of the agency with vigor. He traveled extensively in the southwestern part of the State, presenting the claims of the institution for patronage, collecting money and obtaining curiosities for the museum, and books for the library. It was beautiful to see his interest in the exercises of the students at commencement. Though these exercises were necessarily often protracted, he attended them with great regularity, and in him the young men had a most sympathetic and appreciative hearer. These commencement occasions were also seasons of refreshing to him. On his arrival at Georgetown, weary with travel, and conscious that the infirmities of age were coming upon him, more than once he expressed his intention to resign the office of Curator into younger hands. But cheered by the society of his brethren from all parts of the State, moved by their affectionate but emphatic protests against his resignation, and rejoiced to see the steady development of the University, he would say, on departing for home, that he could not withhold his presence as long

as his brethren thought it of any value to the institution.

In the homes of this community which had the honor of entertaining him his presence was a benediction. In them his entertaining and instructive conversation, his sweet, mellow, Christian spirit, his tender interest in children, and his earnest prayers, are still as "ointment poured forth."

Dr. Mood and Brother DeVilbiss met at the session of the West Texas Conference, at San Antonio, in October, 1884. Some three weeks later the founder of the University had ceased from labor, and entered into rest. A few weeks afterwards he was joined by the faithful friend, who, for years, had stood by his side and held up his hands. They lived to see the University firmly entrenched in the confidence and affections of the Church. And though all their hopes were not realized, yet, should the Church continue the undivided support to which it pledged itself at the inception of the enterprise, their brightest visions will be dimmed by the splendor of the reality. May their holy zeal for Christian education be an inspiration and an impulse to those to whom this great interest is committed!

CHAPTER XIII.

SERMON—BY REV. E. Y. SEALE.

To the Memory of John Wesley De Vilbiss.

"In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me. He shall set me upon a rock." [Psalm xxv:5.

These are precious promises to the sick and the dying; to the good man, when tempted and tried by Satan and the evil world. They can be claimed only by the pure and the good. They belong to them, especially in the time of trouble. When their enemies are too numerous and too powerful for them, then God promises to help, to shield them, by taking them into His pavilion. Pavilion signifies a place of sheltering, a place of security and protection. Secret place of the tabernacle of the Lord implies the same kind of refuge from the ills of life, when all earthly hope goes down in the shadow of death. That secret place was emblemized by the most holy place in the ancient Jewish tabernacle, and later by the Sanctum Sanctorum of the great temple. It was the secret place of God's central dwelling. There was the calm, bright cloud of glory representing the Divine presence, where no mortal was allowed to enter but the High Priest, and he only once a year. It was, truly, the secret place of the emblem of the personal presence of the Most High. Only one man of all the race was ever admitted to that private chamber. None but he could approach near unto the place, and behold the supernatural glory of the God of all the earth. There cherubim stretched out their wings over that hallowed emblem, and intently looked down upon its mild effulgence.

It, too, signifies holiness—purity. God is holy; that sanctum was holy, and nothing unclean could ever enter there. The High Priest could not venture into that sacred place until invested with snowy clean linen upon his cleansed

body, and a pure mind. All that indicated the necessity of holiness with men to render them acceptable to God. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." None other shall see His glory, or enter into His presence; no other obtain the shelter and protection of His pavilion and tabernacle; no other shall be finally lifted upon the rock of divine power.

We shall see these consoling promises claimed by our sainted brother when life began to wane, and death drew near.

Man's estate in this world has ever been a mixed one. Uncertainty and vicissitudes, anxieties and fears, mingle in the life of all men. Many have been unfortunate of every age; while the most prosperous were ignorant of the dangers threatening their downfall, bringing to them a time of trouble. In the midst of the deceitful calm in which they lived, the dark storm which wrought their ruin was already forming. If a man lives many years, and rejoices in them all, yet, let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. To a thoughtful mind nothing can be of more importance than to learn how to prepare to meet the misfortunes of life, so as not to be dismayed at their coming; and to meet them without dejection.

Throughout all ages the wisdom of the wise, the wealth of the rich, and the power of the great, have been employed to guard them and theirs from the ravages of misfortunes. But man is helpless in the presence of decay and ruin. Man, worldly man; man, with all his philosophic skill, finds no shelter from the troubles of life.

But Christianity tells him of a pavilion, a rock, a buckler and a shield which she tenders him in the time of darkness—when earth supplies no hope—if he will accept her protection. But the bulwarks of protection which Christianity affords, are not to temporal things. Earthly losses, afflictions and death befall us all. "The tall, the wise, the reverent head must lie as low" as all others. The prophet and

the priest dies; the good and the evil alike fall under death's conquering power. But the pavilion, the protection God grants the pious in death's dismal veil, is *internal*. It is in the spirit, not the outward man he guards against the enemy's fierce attacks, when nature is being broken down by the spoiler. God gives the Christian sufferer that peace of mind that arises from a conviction of divine protection; then he can exclaim: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they strengthen me!"

Religion, too, prepares the soul for encountering all the most severe shocks of adversity and affliction ere the coming of the mortal day. It gives it fortitude and patience. It had fully qualified the soul of him whose memory we fondly cherish to-day, to meet all life's events with a manly resignation. It had early taught him the value of piety, the vanity of earthly things, and had turned his heart, in youth, from the love of the world, and set his "affections upon things above." His afflictions were not accidental, nor did they take him by surprise. They did not overwhelm him. He was prepared for either life or death. Trained by divine grace, he enjoyed life's blessings. Not lifted up by success, nor overcome by afflictions, he meets life's changes as none but Christians do, bearing his lot without murmuring. He looked to a supreme protecting Providence with reverence and confiding trust and cheerful hope. He had stored his mind with useful knowledge, and grace had fully furnished his heart with good principles and virtuous dispositions. These valuable resources remained with him in all conditions. In his darkest hours he could say: "All things work together for good to them that love God." He enjoyed much of religion in the pilgrimage of life; and he ever carried a dignity of mind peculiar to virtue and a good conscience. He did not claim anything upon the ground of merit, but he trusted in the merit of Jesus, and confided in His blessing upon his toils; yielding a har-

vest to the glory of God, even after he has ceased to labor.

The good examples he has left the living remain, though he be absent. "Being dead, yet he speaketh." Even in sight of the grave, he could say: "I have not run in vain." "I have fought a good fight." "My mind has no load, the future no terror!" "I have endeavored to do my duty to God. I can trust all to Him Who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Our brother was fully apprised that his end was near. He was not alarmed. He was not weary of the world, but was willing to die. Often did he express in strong terms his readiness to go. Can we doubt of his safety in the divine pavilion with these evidences before us? We cannot, we do not doubt. Death to him was an honorable discharge from a long and terrible warfare; an end of long continued and severe afflictions; the beginning of full and unspeakable joy. Farewell, dear brother, till we meet thee "over there."

No more shall we, living brethren, hear his voice from the pulpit! no more shall we meet him in counsel upon the Conference floor! How we shall miss him! He has left us a rich legacy—a holy life and a victorious death. He, too, was more abundant in labors; and when he ceased his annual labors, he often, in affliction's firery trials, cried out: "He shall hide me in His pavilion, in the secret place of His tabernacle shall He hide me. He shall set me upon a rock!"

[Brother Seale was a long and beloved friend of him of whom he writes, and was the pastor of his family when he died, and had many opportunities to know what he has written in the preceding pages.—COMPILER.]

CHAPTER XIV.

EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF JOHN WESLEY DE VILBISS.

By Rev. R. H. Belvin.

[This chapter, written by Rev. R. H. Belvin, well deserves a place in this little biography. For thirty-eight years he was indeed a co-laborer with his intimate friend, in the great west. During much of that time they were daily in danger of the marauding savage; his scalping knife, tomahawk and flying arrows constantly did their cruel deeds of death to the "pale face," in those times of trial and danger. But neither of those men of God received damage from Mexican or Indian. Mutual toils and dangers strongly bind together hearts of friendship. Texan veterans and early settlers that still live are tenderly endeared to each other by memories of hardships and dangers of the olden days. They still have their annual reunions, but their numbers annually decrease, and soon the last one will have passed from the veteran roll. Rev. Mr. Belvin is truly a ministerial veteran of the West Texas Conference upon the superannuated list. He lived neighbor to his friend many years, and had good opportunity to learn both his private and his public life. Soon they shall neighbor inside of the celestial city. At the beautiful gate his friend may wait and watch his coming.]

It is eminently proper that the life of one so pure and useful should be recorded in permanent form for the benefit of future generations. My high estimate of his character is no new-born emotion, but a settled conviction after many years observation, amid the vicissitudes of life and fortune that formed the experiences of the early missionaries in West Texas. I first met him in January, 1847, at the Texas Annual Conference held at Cedar Creek in Washington county. Since that time our acquaintance has been continuous and intimate; our intercourse cordial and friendly.

As memory glides over the past, many fading scenes and incidents that rivited and sealed our friendship are renewed and take on the hues of life again: but I may not record them here. Through many changing scenes and trying fortunes, we lived and labored together; we bore each other's burdens and sorrows, mourned each other's failures, and

shared our mutual triumphs. It is, therefore, a labor of love and pleasure to record my estimate of his character. His name has always stood without a blemish. For more than forty years at each recurring season of the annual conference, when his name was called, it was always answered, "nothing against him." This is a high encomium, but all who knew him will assert the truth of its merit. It is admitted that he made mistakes, that he sometimes erred in judgment, but his heart was always right, and no man mourned more sincerely over his errors, or labored harder to rectify them. His friendship was ardent and sincere. He was no summer friend, but in adversity's darkest hours, his love and sympathy shone brightest, and his efforts strongest to relieve, and many a sad heart has been made happier by his loving kindness. He was truly benevolent to forgetfulness of self. He often freely gave the means necessary for his own comfort to aid the needy. In social intercourse he was easy and pleasant, always cheerful, never morose. Many a home circle has been warmed into cheerfulness by his genial spirit, and many a gathering cloud has been scattered by his Christian influence. He was ardently devoted to the itinerant work. The circuits assigned him were often extremely difficult and dangerous, the financial aid uncertain, but none of these things moved him. He obeyed promptly the mandate of the church, and cheerfully went wherever duty called. He was by nature timid, in no sense "a fighting preacher," but no work was shunned, no point neglected on account of real or supposed dangers or difficulties. He was often forced to labor with his own hands to support his family while serving large circuits or districts, but the faithful hero bared his bosom to the storm and fought to conquer. Faith in the promises of God was his shield, his confidence and trust in Divine aid was unwavering. As a preacher he was fearless, and failed not to reprove sin in all its forms, yet he was persuasive, gentle and loving, and few could resist the pathos and power with

which he spoke. No preacher in the Conference was instrumental in winning more souls to Christ. As a theologian he was eminently Wesleyan, and he had little patience with the modern modification of the doctrines of Methodism, yet he favored the most thorough search after revealed truth. His sermons were clear, systematic and logical; his language plain and forcible. He did not labor to entertain his audiences with the flowers of rhetoric and the graces of eloquence, but to melt and to move them by the power of truth and the story of the cross. He was a friend of education, and did much to promote educational enterprises wherever he lived. His work is done, and well done. Rest in peace, faithful man of God.

CHAPTER XV.

BY REV. A. J. POTTER.

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

God, who has inscribed his name upon all his works, was pleased to make man in his own image. But unregenerate man is now fallen and degraded, in a state of continuous apostasy: but man, now redeemed by the blood of Christ, illumined by the gospel, and born of the Spirit, alone bears the image and superscription of Immanuel--God with us.

In this and every moral view of the righteous, he is so much more excellent than his ungodly neighbors, that he often excites their admiration, and extorts from them the language of the wicked prophet: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." That evil-minded prophet loved the wages of unrighteousness, and a sinful king (Balack) had said unto him: "Come, curse me, Jacob; come, defy Israel." But after he had consulted God by sacrifice, he was forced to pronounce him blessed. Confident of the issue of a pious life, and feeling some forebodings of the end to which his covetous temper and his sinful practices would finally lead him, he uttered that memorable exclamation; a deep, heart-stiring desire for the ultimate reward of the virtuous.

Balaam, like all bad men, was more impressed with the blessedness of the good man's end than with the righteousness of his life. They would inherit the rewards of the pious, but are unwilling to follow the example of their religious life. Such is their unjust and inconsistent principles; they are willing, and even desirous, to inherit a reward in heaven for which they never labored upon the earth. Serve sin and Satan, and crave a divine reward!

We censure their neglect and dislike to a pious life, yet we we command their admiration of the end of a holy life.

We contrast the life and the death of the good and the bad. What is the difference? How does the wicked man live? How does he die? How does the righteous man live? What is his final state? The sacred scriptures testify the world lieth in the wicked one—liveth in the wicked one. Its inhabitants are benighted by Satan, and they are wholly occupied in the pursuit of shadows and illusions. "What shall I eat, and what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I be clothed," are prime questions that move the energies of the world. No regard is paid to the inner man; they provide for him neither food nor raiment. Sanctity of mind, or refinement of manners, enter not into the sphere of their desires. They know not God, and desire none of His ways. Ignorant of the divine character, they resemble Him to themselves, and ascribe human passions and vices unto Him; and having formed a deity after their own image, they treat the idol god with that contempt he inspires, while the wonderful faculties of the immortal spirit lie uncultivated and dormant. Feeding upon the husk with the swine, they are content to range within the limits of fleshly pleasures, and to dwell forever within a hovel of clay. They know not the "terrors of the Lord." As they live, so they die—*brutally, stupidly.* Men may live as fools, and die as the fool dieth, in lands where God is unknown: but in the regions of gospel light they may live as liveth the fool, saying in the heart: "There is no God;" but, as the uninformed heathen, they cannot die, because the light of truth is upon them, unless they have, in life, sinned unto reprobation. In that case men may die with the same unconcern with which they lived. Of these, surviving relatives often say: "They passed away as quietly as a lamb." They die without fear, because they die without knowledge.

But there is another class of men who die in desperation; they die not as the unconscious beast—stupidly, but in horror and despair. The gross sensualist, dishonest infidels, hardened scoffers, hypocrites in religion and heartless apostates—all these usually die in the frantic rage of despair. All the resources of pride and vanity, of business and pleasure, have passed away from them forever. Past convictions revive with greater force, and new lights pour in upon their amazed spirit, and reveal all the horrors of a death in sin unpardoned. In vain they would stop the flight of time; the angel of death, deaf to all entreaties, sternly refuses them a single hour. Alas! of the unhappy wretch, it may be said: chaos is come again! no light! darkness is upon the deep. A thousand reptiles of anguish twine around his heart, and whether he look to earth, heaven or hell, new sorrows meet his eyes. Distracted and hopeless, his ruined spirit leaves the body and passes into the invisible spheres to meet its just deserts!

Now mark the perfect man, and the peaceful end of the upright. Whatever was terrible in death has been so often viewed and reviewed that it has become familiar, and all its terror is gone. He is informed of the love the Father hath for His children of earth. His confidence is not presumption, or a vain boasting of blind faith. He knows whom He has trusted, and fully realizes His sustaining presence in the midst of the valley of the shadow of death. A blind Pharisee leaves the world, as Lot's wife quit Sodom, with an eye looking back upon earthly treasures now lost forever, but the pious Christian departs with a willing mind, and exults in the thought that earth is not his abiding place. He is not of this world while in it, though subject to the changes of time and mortality; his "conversation is in heaven," or about heavenly things, as a citizen of Heaven. His faculties, passions, and his pursuits, are influenced by the powers and glories of the invisible world. He labors

for its riches; aspires for its honors, and pants for its enjoyments. He prefers reason to animal sense. He walks not by the lights of this world, but he lives by the lights of faith in divine revelation. It was said of a certain rich man, that he had his good things in this world. Indeed, what were those good things? All were sensual. He fared sumptuously every day. He *ate*, he *drank*—that was all. Even his purple and fine linen only hid the form of a sensualist. He died! So also must all mortal men, despite their vanity and greatness. No purpled vestments of men can match the beauty of the lily, or vie with the plumage of the bird; and, alas! it all must rot with them in the grave. No matter what their station in life: if they have founded empires, given laws to men, constructed navies, established commerce, accumulated treasures, led victorious armies, and held the balance power of nations in the compass of capacious mind, as well as hoarded up the treasures of science; in one word, say they have gained the whole world; if we read what the word of wisdom has written upon all, "vanity of vanities! all is vanity!"

While the good man has his evil thing in this life, his good things are over the cold river—*fadeless—immortal!* All worldly men crave the end of the good man. Then, dear reader, cast a veil over the life and end of all men of the world, and come up to the mount of beatified vision, and see it all robed in divine glory. Look upon the angelic features of Him Whose life was accounted madness, and Whose death was thought without honor. His earthly pilgrimage is ended, and now His pure spirit shines as the sun shineth in the firmament of heaven. There no sickness, no pain, no death can come: all is immortal! St. Paul saw much of the excess of the radiant glories there, but spoke little of them, and we may imitate his modesty. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard the full-orbed glories God has pre-

pared for His earth-born children. Enough is revealed to inspire hope and zeal.

It is wisdom in mortal man to desire to end life as the righteous close it, and to pass with them into the immortal Paradise; but, then, they should be consistent and just in living here as the righteous live.

Now, kind reader, let us see how the life and death of Rev. J. W. DeVilbiss comport with the foregoing principles: Forty-four years of his life were spent in the holy ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A. I. Potter.

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CHAPTER XVI.

EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF REV. J. W. DE VILBISS.

By Rev. Andrew Jackson Potter, The Noted Border Preacher.

My first acquaintance with Brother DeVilbiss was during the war. In 1862 our company was stationed at "Camp Verde" in Kerr county. Brother DeVilbiss was holding a quarterly meeting in Kerrville. He was then presiding elder of the San Antonio district. I obtained leave of absence from my good Captain Holms, and attended the quarterly meeting. I was a young preacher then, but the presiding elder gave me a cordial reception, and he put me in the pulpit to preach time about with himself. I remember that the good Lord poured out His Spirit upon us, and we had some glorious seasons of divine grace. There was no preacher on that circuit that year, owing to the war, and all the preaching they got was at the quarterly meetings held by the presiding elder. The Kerrville quarterly meeting was truly a happy occasion to me. I formed an attachment for that eminent servant of God that grew and strengthened to the end of his life. I do not think I met him any more until after the war: in the winter of 1866, the conference was held in Seguin, Bishop Marvin, presiding: at that time he was appointed agent of the American Bible Society. The next year the conference was held in the same place, Bishop McTyeire, presiding. I felt a deep impression to go to the frontier. Brother DeVilbiss seemed to read my thoughts, and seating himself beside me in the Conference room, asked me if I would go to the frontier. I told him I was willing to go. He rose up suddenly and approached the Bishop, and said in a low tone of voice, "I have got a man for the frontier." I was sent to the Kerrville circuit, and he frequently visited my circuit in the interest of the Bible cause that year. His presence was a rich benediction to me. He was wise in counsel. The better I

knew him the more I was impressed that he was a man of peace. He knew the genuine spirit of religion, and understood its value to his own spirit, to the church and to the world. He therefore hated strife and contention, and would never take part in the disputes of individuals, or Christians, with whom he was immediately associated. As a peacemaker, the God of peace blessed his work and he was often made happy by settling difficulties and clearing up misunderstanding with brethren and enemies. He was endowed with the rare virtue of Christian prudence. He knew men and things, and he considered times and circumstances, and cautiously guarded whatever was befitting the occasion. He well knew when to speak and when to be silent. He governed his tongue alike from intemperate speech and excess of confidence. Let no man think those virtues of little merit. Inspiration calls them "wisdom"—heavenly wisdom. Their office is to rule the whole man, and to preside over all the graces. They constitute the safe-guard of peace, and the guide to honor and influence among men.

In 1876 I held a camp meeting on Pipe's Creek in Bandera county. The meeting began with large congregations but I had no ministerial help. I soon felt that I could not long hold up under all the pulpit labor. My anxiety was intense, when to my great joy and surprise Brother DeVilbiss drove up to my relief. I could scarcely have been happier had I met an angel. Indeed he was an angel, a messenger of God to the people. Truly did he help me. I never heard him preach with such pathos and power before, nor since. I can not describe it. He swept everything before him like a gale of wind. His discourses were well connected, but not trammeled with the art of style; yet his style was chaste and instructive, though simple and easy of comprehension by the masses. But when he began to hurl thunder-bolts of sacred truth at the impenitent, sinners began to cry out, "what must I do to be saved?" Many souls were converted ere the close of the meeting.

He was a most lovely companion. The uniformity of his life, the Christian simplicity of his manners, the meekness of his spirit, his love of peace, the instructive tendency of his social converse, and the unction attending his public ministrations for forty years, are well known and will be fondly cherished by those that survive him. His preaching was truly spiritual and profitable to his hearers. His love for the people he served was fervent and undying, and perhaps no man ever received more cordial evidences of affection from the people than he. He met a glad reception at cabin and mansion.

His seas, however, were not always tranquil; his skies not ever cloudless and bright. He had his trials, his dark hours. All men have them. Paul had his "thorn in the flesh." If a man meets no foes he cannot be a victor. The great enemy of all good assailed our departed brother severely at times, as he attacked the Master, but was ever foiled. It all only inspired the victor with deeper humility and more meekness. He was well broken to the yoke of Christ in lowliness of mind. The effects of his wrestling with the enemy were seen in the pulpit; his prayers and sermons were bedewed with tears and an unction that ever moved the multitude. He ever manifested an exemplary patience under trials: complaints of weakness, indisposition or pain seldom escaped his lips, even in suffering. He was, truly, a man refined by grace. A manly fortitude and Christian submission always predominated in voice and manner when in the greatest suffering. He was more than patient; and in the ordinary tenor of his life he was happily cheerful. His innocent cheerfulness sometimes arose to pleasantry, indicating a pure and an innocent mind. He ever kept his spirits, in his most merry moods, under the command of ministerial gravity. He often smiled in tears when he spoke of heavenly rest, encouraging others and himself to hope unto the end. He sought no honors, claimed no pre-eminence, and carefully shunned all distinctions among

his brethren. His ambition rose no higher than to be one with the useful and the good. To fully paint his picture my pen is inadequate. To say that he was greatly and generally beloved is only to state a fact. He drew hearts to him by gentle and strong attractions, and those once gained were his friends to the close of his life. He was open and frank in all his dealings with men. If his heart was moved with love to his brethren, he would tell them how he loved them for Jesus' sake. Often did he cheer up my failing spirits after a year's hard strugling along the border. Coming into the Conference room, he would gently coil his arm around me, as if I were his own son, and say: "Potter, I love you!" One night, after I had preached for him in Tenth street Church, in San Antonio, we were riding in his buggy to his place of stopping: he was happy and he pressed his arm about me, saying: "Brother Potter, I love you, your sermon to-night did my soul good!" He loved to cheer and strengthen his ministerial brethren by telling them how their preaching fed his soul. All scriptural preaching feasted his soul. He lived upon the "sincere milk of the word." On our way to Conference at Corpus Christi, I preached at night at Beeville. DeVilbiss was happy and came up to the altar at the close of the services, saying: "God bless you, Brother Potter! Your sermon did my soul good;" and he added: "If you had the advantage of a liberal education: if you could just use a little better English, you would be my favorite preacher." So much did he love to encourage his brethren in their good work. A brighter constellation of virtues seldom meet in one character in the Church. His lamp was always upon the center table, and it gave light unto all wherever he lived and moved. Truly was his life as a "city upon a hill."

In 1871 I traveled the Medina circuit. Brother DeVilbiss lived in its bounds, but being Presiding Elder of the Corpus Christi district, he was absent most of the time;

but during his visits at home he rendered me efficient service in my work. We had many pleasant seasons of divine worship, and some gracious outpourings of the holy spirit upon the congregations. I was with him at several camp meetings at Oak Island, near his home. He always camped upon the ground, and contributed much to the support of the meetings. There he was more than zealous, and great power attended his labors. The brethren of the West Texas Conference must feel proud of the fact that so good and so useful a man was our brother and fellow laborer, our father! We dwell upon his memory with delight, and earnestly desire that our death and "last end may be like his!"

Then let us consider the steps by which he reached that end in peace. Let us follow him as he followed Christ. Let us learn to be meek and lowly of heart: for if we are not so we cannot have the spirit of Christ, nor that of our departed brother. Dear, sainted father! I recall with grateful remembrance the many kind words that fell from your lips to build me up under trials sore, and to strengthen me for the day of conflict. Oh, when I shall faint in toils, and fall with victory upon my shield, and shall hear my Captain-General say: "Come home!" will you not meet me at the portal of glory and say: "Come in, Potter! I love you! Come in!"

What a plain and forcible portrayal of all the charming virtues that made up the pure character of his friend, has Brother Potter given the reader in the preceding pages? Potter knew him well, having been familiar with his ministerial life more than twenty years. Though I have said in another chapter that they were antipodes in some elements of character, yet I state truthfully when I inform the reader that in other elements they were similar. Potter is a paradox; brave and dauntless, ever ready to act the pugil-

ist, and to assume the soldier when circumstances seemed to demand; yet full of the tenderest sensibilities, and easily moved with pity for human woe. In such tender emotions they were as one, and they ever loved and admired each other. Potter, too, was a fine judge of human character, and seldom misplaced his affection and confidence.

Potter advanced nearer the enemy's gun range, but DeVilbiss was more extensive in travel and toil, and much earlier in the field. He has fallen; but Potter still advances upon the enemy's retreating ranks, almost upon the border of the shadow of the Rocky Mountains. When Potter comes to the "beautiful gate," no doubt DeVilbiss will reach out his immortal hand and say: "Potter, I love you! Come in!"

CHAPTER XVII.

PRIME CAUSE OF HIS MINISTERIAL POWER—AN IMMORTAL STATE.

By the Compiler.

We have hurriedly led our readers over some of the many events in a life of forty years in the western border of Texas, by one of the best and most useful men that ever passed over her great prairies. We have read of his pure life, by competent and reliable authors—men who knew him best. We have seen some of the many sacrifices he made; some of the hardships he endured; some of his labors and sufferings in meeting the duties his great mission enjoined upon him. We, too, have seen how a journeyman youth from a saddler's shop grew into a man of wisdom, position, and usefulness and power in the Church, and in the world, in the meandering life of an itinerant Methodist preacher. We now see how the living fondly cherish the memory of his merits and mourn his absence.

A man called of God, as was Aaron, coming out of the farm, the shop, the store, the college, the bar, or the hovel, with due application, will rise into positions of acceptability and usefulness—a workman not to be ashamed, but welcomed and honored by the little and the great, for his personal merit and practical usefulness; with the divine spirit to aid him he must succeed; "thanks be to God, who always causes us to triumph." It is God's spirit that makes the preacher's message efficient. Without that spirit all the learning in the world, that of men or angels, will never lead sinners unto repentance. Learning is proper; the preacher should study to show himself approved of God. Study revelation, nature, God, angels and men. Study art, science, literature, and the duties of morals and religion. In a word, study all things—life, death and immortality. But with all knowledge, without the indwelling and helping power of the Holy

Spirit, the preacher had better vacate his pulpit, for he is only "a sounding brass and a tinkling symbol." It was the ever helping presence of God with our sainted brother that made him pure, great and successful in the ministry of the Word. Let the young men who put on his fallen mantle seek the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in all their private and public ministrations, and in the social spheres; then shall the cause for which he gave his life spread and increase in his western field till the day of final triumph.

When the day of his departure came he was ready to go, as Elijah of olden fame. The heavens parted, and the "chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," stood by his side. Without a sigh, his pure spirit stepped into the chariot flame, and the horsemen—the angel charioteers, reined up, up into the crystal ether, till, passing all illumined spheres, the angel watchers espied the approaching throng, and cried out: "All hail! Welcome, child of the mission field." "All hail! Come in, child of sorrow, come in!" Ah! could we have heard ten thousand times ten thousand, and nameless millions of the Church of the first born, and an innumerable company of angels, repeat: "Welcome! Son of many toils!" "Yea, welcome! Come into the Joy of the Lord!" We would not sorrow: for our loss is his infinite gain. Yea, while our pen indites these lines, tears of joy fall at an imaginary view of his present glory and honor, and hope whispers: "You shall meet up there at the beautiful gate, where dear ones are 'waiting and watching for me.'"

When the wires and journals told of his death, more than fifty thousand hearts felt a pang, and many dear ones shed a tear, because John Wesley DeVilbiss was dead! But yet he liveth. O! indeed! is there not somewhere in God's pure realms, where sin, pain, tears and death come not? Where loved ones meet to part no more? Friendship and love are more than names that charm into the sleep of despair. Love is immortal, and must meet its objects in the immortal state.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HIS ACQUISITIONS AND THE VALUE OF MONEY.

He was a man of industrious habits. Though his early advantages were quite limited, he, by studious application, when not engaged in his ministerial work, gained a knowledge of surveying, which often enabled him to supplement his little income from the church. He was said to be skillful in the use of the compass. He also studied, and so far mastered the German language, as to be able to speak and write it intelligibly. He was the first presiding elder among the Germans in Texas: and he wrote sermons and delivered them in German. He also became conversant with the Spanish language.

Being possessed of such an active spirit, a station confined to the limits of a town or a city, was too close a pen for him. He wanted room to operate in, hence he was appointed to few stations in forty years. He did the work requiring the largest amount of travel and labor generally. When presiding elder of the German district he traveled across the entire State of Texas, and into a part of the State of Louisiana. When agent for the Southwestern University, the vast territory of Texas was his field of operation. When agent for the American Bible Society, the greater part of the same State was his territory: and when on the Helena and San Antonio districts, the extent of the fields equaled the entire area of several of the older States, more extensive than the present limits of the Tennessee annual Conference. Being true and faithful to the duties arising out of these vast fields, he must often have been as a stranger at home.

No man of less than an unconquerable energy and an indomitable perseverance could have acquired such an amount of knowledge under all such arduous labors, and at the same

time give attention to the wants of a growing family. No wonder that he died a poor man, when we remember the small stipend he received annually from the Church for such toilsome work. Jesus said that the laborer is worthy of his hire, by which he not only meant that he should be paid his hire, but that the hire should be fully compensative for the amount and quality of the labor done. Our Brother sometimes attached blame to himself for defective financiering as the cause of his leanness of funds in his time of afflictions and feebleness. But how could he have done better with his limited means to operate with? Church duties absorbed him. Perhaps he was more liberal toward the institutions of the Church at her annual sessions than the thinness of his purse should have justified. We know that he was ever willing to help when a call was made. Under the stimulating appeals which are generally made to the public at these annual convocations, the preachers sometimes contribute more than the public. That is an error; especially is it an error when the preacher's home wants demand the contents of his purse.

The value of money is a lesson some ministers seem not to learn. To use money to the best advantage does not enter into their thoughts and plans; hence, it is said of them, as a class, that they are poor financiers. To hoard up money for the love of it is an evil to be condemned, but to prepare means to meet our wants, and to preserve what is not immediately needful, for future use, is a duty we owe to ourselves and to society, to prevent our dependence upon society for help. To strictly construe the saying of Jesus, "take no thought for the morrow," is also an error. Jesus did not intend to forbid a prudent forecast as to the future, or a prudent provision for age, or days of affliction. Young ministers of the Annual Conferences should early learn the value of money, and practice economy as well as benevolence, remembering the days of dependence which are coming up in the events of the future. But ministers of relig-

ion are not exempt from duties of charity and benevolence simply because they are called to minister in sacred things. There is an unchangeable rule laid down in the gospel which measures out the duty of all men, and in all ages, and in all spheres of life, in all countries. That measure is ABILITY; "according as God hath prospered him"—that is the infallible rule. No man is released from its obligations. If he hath nothing, nothing is required. If he hath but little, but little is demanded of him; if he hath much, a large amount is asked at his hands. "Where much is given much is required," both in talents and in money. Charity to the poor, and benevolence to the Church and its institutions, are as much the duty of the clergy, according to ability, as it is that of the laity. Such gifts are denominated *charity* and *benevolence* to distinguish them from civil obligations. They are as strongly bound upon us by the duties imposed by moral obligations as those imposed by civil ones. A profuse and impoverishing benevolence by any one is an error, in excess of duty. By it, business may be damaged, and the contributor embarrassed in his civil duties. Contributions over and above the measure of ability by ministers not only embarrass his finances, render him truly poor, consume the means for family supplies, but greatly trammel him in his ministerial work. Jesus said of the poor widow, that of her *two mites* she had cast into the temple treasury more than all the great gifts of the rich, because she had given all she had. She gave *all*, having *nothing* left. Her motive was good, but her gift was above the requisition of the law. It made no such demand upon her purse. It, too, leaned upon some extraordinary interposition of Providence to supply her immediate necessities. Jesus did not commend the *wisdom* of her gift, but he did approve of her *motive* and her *faith*. At the sessions of Annual Conferences poor preachers of meager salaries sometimes almost imitate the example of the poor widow—give all they have. If a man

has no more than he owes to others by civil contracts, he has nothing to give. It is not his; it is the rightful property of his creditors; and the man has no right to be benevolent for his creditors. "Be just before charitable," is an old saying founded upon the elements of duty.

It is the opinion of the writer that some itinerant Methodist preachers go beyond the measure of duty in their contributions at the Annual Conferences. Churchmen and outsiders are often slow in their answers to the calls of the Church; the preachers who are more sensitively allied with Church enterprises hasten to push forward propositions to fill up the treasury of the Lord, and, in their animated zeal, they impoverish their purse to meet the calls of the Church. The exciting methods practiced at those annual convocations often exert an undue influence upon the preacher's deep concern for the Church's welfare, and lead him beyond the dictates of duty in giving. The best talent, and the wisest tacticians, are put upon the rostrum to inform the audience of the Church's claims, and to stimulate the heart to the highest point of liberal giving. Those orators sometimes reach the regions of objectional enthusiasm; and the pious ones are aroused to a high degree of emotion, and empty the contents of their lean purses into the sacred treasury.

Ministers of religion of other Churches can well afford to be liberal in their gifts to the Church, because of their comparative liberal salaries; but Methodist preachers, whose annual income will not exceed, upon an average, three hundred dollars, can spare but a mite, if the wants of their families are respected. If he gives, he, in the gift, sacrifices for his wife and babes.

CHAPTER XIX.

NATURE OF HIS RELIGION, AND STYLE OF PREACHING.

He was not what is generally styled a great preacher. He was above mediocrity in the pulpit. He did not facinate his audience with richness of style, painting his paragraphs in the brilliant colorings of an embellished rhetoric; yet he was a sound and forcible preacher, plain in statements, clear in his perceptions of truth, and profound in earnestness of delivery, as well as fluent in speech. One who could sleep under his ministry must have been of a stupid class. He spoke and wrote correctly, seldom violating his mother tongue either in speaking or writing. He was not a fanatic. He was a Christian gentleman: yet his pulpit efforts were of a successful character among the masses. They were marked by an earnest zeal which came from the heart, and which moved the hearts as well as convinced the judgment of his hearers. He had a heart that could weep, like his divine Master, with the sorrowing, and rejoice with the glad and happy. He often baptized the truth with his tears. He was not ashamed to weep over the sins of men while delivering unto them the message God had sent unto them, or with the sorrowing penitent at the altar.

"Did Christ o'er sinners weep,
And shall our cheeks be dry?"

He seemed not to covet that amount of ministerial dignity that would shut the love of God out of his heart, and dry up the fountain of sympathy in the soul. His sermons, his prayers, and his songs, carried in them the elements of the breath of heaven; coming out fresh from a heart filled with celestial fire. When he said: "Glory to God!" he meant it; he felt it arise out of the depths of the soul; and

you, dear reader, would feel that it was the spontaneous out-gush of a happy soul.

Such was the character of John Wesley DeVilbiss' religion, and such the style of his preaching, singing and praying all over Texas, for the period of forty years. No wonder he charmed the hearts of sinners, and won them over to Christ; no wonder that churches rose to honor Christ in the path of his toils. He was passionately fond of love feast. He was often chosen by committees on public worship to hold the Sabbath morning love feasts at the annual session of Conference, and they were always times of rejoicing when he led them, because he would rejoice, and others would partake of the same spirit. And, ah! the heavenly melody of his song, mingling with that of his brethren: it would charm the heart as the seraph's song; one might feel carried away to a realm of song, where the echoes of the chantings of celestial minstrels mingle with the melodies of earth, or where the soft sweet notes of the night lute float o'er the unruffled bosom of tranquil seas. But now that spirit voice chimes in with the celestial "song of Moses and of the lamb." Its heavenly melodies shall fall upon our ears no more till we shall greet him on the other shore.

The reader will please allow the liberty of a digression just here, and read a brief defense of our deceased Brother's religion, and his zealous ministry.

During the continuance of an exciting camp-meeting recently held near to a certain city, an intelligent gentleman, and a devoted member of the Protestant Episcopal Church, said to the writer that he did not believe in an emotional religion nor approve of sensational preaching. Such really is the faith of thousands of intelligent, upright people in the world; but their faith is surely based upon an error. It discards the true philosophy of the influence of forces upon humanity, mentally and physically. Webster says that emotion is of the mind, and sensation is of the body. The

emotion and sensation include all the effects that religious forces may have upon man's soul and body. The influence religious truth has upon man depends upon two things, namely: his faith in that truth, and the nature of his temperament. If, when the preacher urges upon him the fact that he is a sinner exposed to perdition every moment, he is firmly convinced of its truth, that truth must of necessity produce an emotion in his soul, unless he is given over to hardness of heart, and the extent of that emotion upon his heart, and its sensation upon his physical man are measured by the peculiar temperament of both mind and body of the compound man. When under the conviction that he is a sinner exposed to divine wrath, the soul will certainly be moved with emotions of fear, sorrow, and regret, and all kindred impulses, as well as responsive sensations of the body. But, again, when the sinner is told that Jesus loved and died to forgive him all his sins, that truth firmly grasped awakes a different class of emotions in his soul; love and joy instantly spring up in his heart. Here, too, the extent of the influence of the emotions of love and joy upon his mind and the sensations upon his body are graduated by faith, temperament and the degree of sin from which he feels released. Jesus said he would love most who was forgiven most. Man is constituted designedly that truth shall convince him, and motives shall move him to action by the emotions of the soul. Life itself is emotional. That which is incapable of emotion and sensation is dead. We read of the dead calm of a motionless sea We speaak of a dead body when it has neither emotion nor sensation in it. Touch it, it feels not your touch, it has no sensation; speak to it, it hears you not it has no emotion; is not capable of it, it is dead. Life, then, itself is emotional and sensational. God Himself is emotional, man is emotional—made in the image of God. All nature is emotional; even the unfeeling part thereof which has no sensation is filled with emotions of unconscious life—the dumb

rocks, and all metalic substances, the living forest and the restless heaving ocean, all have emotions of life, but no sensation. No emotion is the criterion of death. But man and all animal creation have both emotion and sensation. Man is higher in the emotional scale than all nature below him, as a higher, purer class of motives move him. The wily deer lies securely under the deep shade of the lonely forest, but when the well known peal of the huntsman's horn falls upon his ear, and a sensation is produced upon his body, and an emotion of fear is enkindled in his spirit, instantly he bounds away over hill and dale to escape danger: there truly is emotion in an excited state. The untamed bird of the wilderness, with his keen eye sees the approach of the skillful fowler, and he spreads his wings upon the air and proudly soars away to some sequestered vale or mountain height, where the fowler's leaden hail cannot reach him. There, too, is sensation and emotion—emotion of fear moving the subject to flee from danger; and shall man be less sensational and emotional in his efforts to escape danger than the beasts and fowls beneath him? Never! God hath not made him so.

Opponents of religious emotions allow man great latitude of emotion in all things but in religion; and there his emotions should be greatest, because the theme is greater than all others. Men lose their dear ones—they are moved with emotions of grief, they weep, they sorrow, they scream at the verge of despair, and it is all right; but when religious considerations are presented to the mind, they must remain unmoved by fear or joy. Must steel their hearts against emotion—must become stoics—dead. It is an impossibility. It is a false philosophy. Men will fear God and weep over sin, and rejoice in salvation while there are sinners in the world and sins to be forgiven.

We said that God is emotional. He is not like the imagined Hindoo deity, retired from all creation into the bosom of profound repose, unaffected by anything, and not

concerned about anything. God is love. Love is affection, affection is emotion. It is a feeling fixed upon an object. God loves all His works, but man is the object of His highest emotion—love. God cannot be moved with fear, for He has nothing to fear. But love for His works, and pity for the fallen and ruined, dwell in His divine bosom. But with man, the two highest emotions of an intelligent creature, are given to move him—*love* and *fear*. There are many things to love, but one thing to fear—*danger*. Fear cannot exist where there is no danger. If man is not in danger of the wrath of God for his sins, it is silly to fear the hereafter; but if indeed he is as the gospel teaches, he should fear, and that emotion should move him to immediate efforts to become reconciled to Him, or he acts a silly part, in endangering his eternal salvation. The preacher is an alarmist sent of God to awake and alarm men in their sins, and induce them to flee the imminent danger to which sin exposes them.

The old prophet, Jeremiah, had an emotional religion. He cried out, and said: "O, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" A preacher weeping day and night now over the sins and dangers of men, would shock the fastidious. But the sins of men now are enough to make angels weep; yet the cool formalist cries out for *order* and *quiet* in the sanctuary. Over sinners Jesus wept—Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets! Now thy good is hid from thine eyes!

Apostolical religion was emotional, and apostolical preaching was sensational. Peter's preaching upon the Pentecostal day produced great emotions in the hearts of his hearers. In the nervous scriptural phrase, "they were pricked in their hearts, and cried out, what shall we do?" On that memorable morning the unction of divine power was poured upon the apostles in the visible form of cloven tongues of fire, according to divine promise. That hal-

lowed fire created wonderful emotions in their souls and corresponding sensations in their bodies. The history says that they all gloried God, that is, praised him, in such a manner that they attracted the attention of the multitude, and they ran together to see what was the occasion of all such strange noise. Such indeed was the peculiar sensations and gesticulations of the apostles that some of the crowd hastily pronounced them drunken. In these days converts are said to be *excited*, *emotional*, *fanatical*, etc., etc. The shouts and movements of the divinely empowered apostles on that day exceeded those of Methodist revivals of modern times.

At the return of the prodigal son there was great emotion with the whole family and friends. The father said, rejoice with me, for this my son is alive, whom I mourned as dead. Truly these were rejoicings about temporal things, but Jesus used the parable to illustrate spiritual things. He says, likewise, there is joy in heaven among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Then, let the earth be glad, if heaven rejoices; and let men praise God, if the angels shout at the return of a sinner. The world is moved by emotions. The emotions of steam drive round the whirling wheels. The poet *saw* it, he *felt* it, when he wrote:

> "'Tis love that drives my chariot wheels,
> And death must yield to love!"

Religion is a system of doctrines and a class of moral rules to be obeyed. It is all that, and much more. It is also a moral gift infused into the soul by divine influence. It imparts something to man he had not before. It is the "love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which is given" unto men. Jesus called it "power from on high," the being endued with it was the divine promise to the apostles fulfilled upon the Pentecostal day. It gave them a moral power, an energy of emotion, and dauntless courage to speak the gospel truth in the face of the murderers of Jesus. A divine impulse was also in the heart of

the ruddy shepherd lad, when he ran impulsively into the battle, with his sling and pebbles. A divine impulse moved his heart and nerved his arm when he whirled his sling; a divine power directed the little stone when it leaped from the sling, and carried it straight to the giant's head. It is an emotion divinely inspired.

The advance of learning and refined literature in the present age, and the rapid growth of science and the arts, create a demand for a more learned and talented ministry; but no degree of wisdom or learning can justify the abolition of emotion from the preacher's heart, when delivering God's message to men. There is an error in public opinion just here; that is, that emotional preaching is confined to a class of uninformed men, or rather, that great emotion in the pulpit is evidence of a want of information; and the learning of the churches is toward a more intellectual, and a less emotional class of pastors. Wherever such notions obtain, cold ritualism and lifeless formality are the hurtful results. God made man an emotional creature; his mentality is made up of *thought* and *emotion*. They go together in normal man. Where emotion is suppressed the man is in an abnormal state. Emotion must keep pace with thought. The more important the thought and the subject in hand, the more intense the emotion. But there is a limit to thought and emotion. They range in the sphere of truth and common sense. A strained degree of emotion is unnatural—*fanatical*, and damaging. An intellectual religious pastorate is, indeed, a necessity of the times, but one of the deepest concern and the most vital emotions is equally needful. The pulpit must be terribly in earnest in telling men of their sins, and warning them of the direful consequences. Sin kills beyond the grave. Fill them with the purest emotions of love. "Cry aloud and spare not" is the divine command. Sow in tears. Refrain not to weep over the impenitence of men when the heart is divinely moved. Years ago in Middle Tennessee, Dr. A. L. P. Green was

preaching at a camp-meeting, and quite a number of the adherents of Alexander Campbell were present. The Doctor was in the prime of his ministry, a man of the finest order of intellect and refined emotion: he was preaching one of his powerful sermons, when suddenly one of Mr. Campbell's followers fell to the earth screaming for help and divine mercy. His brethren gathered about him and began to carry him away, but he begged to be let alone. They told him that he was excited and that he had better go into a tent and take a nap of sleep; that then his fears would cease; but the man cried out, "What? take a nap of sleep upon the brink of hell!" His friends deserted him. A sinner's faith enlivened awakes his fears.

CHAPTER XX.

EQUIPMENTS FOR CIRCUIT RIDERS IN EARLY TIMES—DIFFERENCE.

In the earlier days of Methodism, and even at the time of the short lived Republic of Texas, the necessary equipments for a "circuit rider" were quite meagre—a good horse and a pair of roomy saddle wallets; and the requisite qualities for the preacher himself were few, but needful—a good constitution, able to endure hardships as a good soldier of his Master: a good delivery of speech, a gift of song, a fair stock of common sense, and a large measure of zeal for his Master's cause. Where all these combined in the person of the preacher, he was a giant in Israel's hosts. All these elements met in the man whose life is now presented to the reader. He was gifted in song. He loved to sing. He was eloquent in prayer, and clear and forcible in the pulpit; hence, he deserves to be ranked with the successful. He traveled over all of Texas territory, and men won to Christ through his ministry are found everywhere in her vast empire. But the times have changed. Much more, and that which is different, are demanded of the pastor now. Indeed, few "circuit riders" remain in the field in these times. In the older times it was said that the Methodist preacher "lived on horseback and kept house in saddlebags," but now the horse is swapped off for a span of good trotters, and the saddle wallets are changed for the valise and a buggy. Preachers thus equipped are not "circuit riders," but are designated "ministers," or "D. D's." The song of the preacher is exchanged for the music of the organ and the trained choir. The most popular qualification for the preacher now is the annex of D. D. to his name, or a certificate of graduation from some institution of learn-

ing, together with attractive methods in the pulpit—of brief duration. Such is the nature of things in these times. The veteran preachers who pioneered in this land are not now in demand. The refined intelligence and taste of the great cities have advanced beyond the plain gospel methods of the old itinerant. Pastors suited to the wants of these refined cities, must be imported by transfers from other States. The veteran sowed and cultivated, but the stranger comes in and reaps the harvest. Ministers seeking fat places and easy seats, or those desiring healthier climes, can be readily secured to fill all such stations in this broad Texas. In this manner the old men are pushed out, if able to do effective work, into the poorer circuits, where quite a limited support is given them, and they, one after another, die poor. This course of events is likely to continue until the last old soldier has crossed the cold river, and an entire host of new recruits, of a different style, shall have taken the field. For the manifest evil in this current of things, there appears no present remedy. Just here, is the reader not reminded of a strange saying of St. Paul: "Shall heap to themselves teachers having itching ears." It does not matter who had the itching ears—the teachers, or the people; there was an evil in it. Transfers in Methodist economy are legitimate, and often needful, but to please the fancy of a people, or to get an easy station for a place-seeking preacher, is an evil. Wisdom is good, and literary acquisitions are of value, but to esteem a minister for his learned intelligence only is unwise. Pleasant mannerism in the pulpit is not objectionable, and a logical method of presenting truth is profitable, but sincere heart earnestness and strong faith are of the greatest utility.

It is said of Sam Jones, one of the greatest living evangelists, that his earnest zeal demonstrates the strength of his faith that men are sinners, and without repentance and regeneration, they all will be lost. That is the gospel message. "God so loved the world that He gave his only

begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Without Christ men must perish forever. With Christ men shall be saved. It must be told, not in a careless and indifferent manner, nor in an uncouth style, but in the fervor of an earnest zeal, in plain and simple words; told with emotion: emotion enkindled in the heart by the value of the truth, and the influence of the spirit of Christ. The preacher thus qualified for his work shall meet with success, more or less. Churches and people who are fastidious about methods and style remind the writer of a story told of John Randolph of Roanoke. He was punctilious to a dot about the correct pronunciation of words. A word miscalled was offensive to him. Once upon a time he sent for a minister of religion, thinking he was going to die. The servant brought in an inexperienced young circuit rider. After refreshments having been served to the young preacher, he was conducted into Mr. Randolph's sick room. Mr. Randolph asked him to get the Bible and read and administer to him the consolations of religion. In reading, the timid preacher soon miscalled a word, and Mr. Randolph corrected the error, but coming to the same word again, the excited preacher pronounced it as at first. Mr. Randolph corrected the mistake again, and kindly asked the minister not to call it that way any more, but the purturbed preacher forgot the true pronunciation, and coming to the word the third time called it in the old way: that was more than Mr. Randolph could endure, and he said, in an animated tone, "there sir, stop; that ends the matter; I had rather die and go to hell than to hear that word called that way any more." The writer cannot vouch for the truth of the story, but it illustrates.

We once knew of an eloquent preacher of another church being caught in a case of scandal, and his church dismissed him, but parties fond of listening to his great eloquence obtained subscriptions to erect him another church. One of

the party presented the subscription list for a contribution to a gentleman who refused it because of the sullied moral character of the preacher, when the other stated, with an ugly oath, that he cared not for the preacher's religion; it was his *oratory* that he wanted to hear. That looks like an "itching ear." It is to be feared that much of the leaning of the churches of the present age toward a learned and talented ministry, is the result of "itching ears." It can not be denied that several of the churches are burdened with the weight of dignified prelates and honored doctors; and still they make them. The sanctums are thronged with their increasing multitudes. The great occasions of schools and churches find them on hand ready to occupy the forum and the pulpit. They sit in the editorial chairs of church journals, and their personal notices are confined almost entirely to the movements of the doctorated class. The ugly motto of "tickle me and I'll tickle you" sits enthroned upon the tripods of the churches. Reading these periodicals one must think that great doctors of divinity fill up the class of ministers of the gospel in these times, save now and then an old fogy, who is out of date—in rear of the times. Great men must have great occasions on which to display their talents. Upon these occasions they must make great speeches and preach great sermons to sustain their reputations; hence few souls are converted upon these great occasions. The reason is evident. God cares more for the salvation of a sinner than for the dignity and reputation of a preacher. God is not in the fire and storm of logic and rhetoric that animated the crowd with "itching ears." Seldom do we hear of the conversion of souls now a days, at the annual and general Conferences, where ministers are expected to do their best preaching. God is not in a sermon uttered to please men; it is as a "tinkling cymbal;" nothing more.

It seems patent to the writer that God is now beginning to rebuke the folly of this *excessive greatness* in His church

by raising up men of no repute to do the work of evangelists. Look at the undoctorated man of Georgia, who, as John the Baptist, seemed to come up out of the wilderness of non-fame. "As a root out of a dry ground," he had no comeliness of character for greatness. See how God has honored his earnest ministry. Multiplied thousands crowd upon each other to hear him in his simple, fervid manner tell men of their sins, and of the dying love of Jesus to save them. That successful class of evangelist is creating an impression upon the public mind that the regular ministry of the times is a *failure;* and a call for helping evangelists is heard in the central seats of vice and crime; and if the churches will not read the signs of the times, and cease that folly of weighting down her ministry with the silly titles of perishable fame and false dignity, and then call such trammeled ones to their pastorates, the crying wants of the millions will leave them and their great honored pastors in the rear of a dead formalism, and will follow after God-called evangelists as in thet imes of Luther and Wesley. Men who study and preach to gain the approbation of men shall fail, while those that study and preach, as St. Paul said unto Timothy, to show that they are approved of God, must, in some manner, succeed: because it is God, through His Son, that causeth them to triumph. May the ministerial neophyte who aspires to greatness of name, read correctly the hand-writing upon the wall.

HOW CHANGED THE TIMES?

Should you meet a clerical stranger midway across one of Texas' boundless prairies, upon a heated summer day, would you take him to be a preacher, and guess the nature of his mission? Is there anything about him that might awaken even a surmise as to the character of his calling? If you were familiar with the custom of those times, you might guess rightly. Men of the world, traders, merchants,

and men of large cattle herds, often traveled in groups. Their bags of gold, or silver, were generally tied to the horns of their saddles, with a brace of pistols, or else the pistols were belted to their waists. The minister generally went alone. He had no visible carnal weapons. The weapons of his warfare are not carnal. No bag of gold is pendent from his saddle, for he has none to carry. There, too, is a grave, sweet kindness in his manner of greeting that gently tells of his mission of love.

How changed are the faces of things now! Those days are gone, never to return. The land is being crowded with a mixed population from all shores. The great prairies are now dotted with farms and villages. The counties are striped with iron-bound roads. Rivers and creeks are spanned with bridges, and the towns and cities, and the whole face of the country are stocked with schools and churches; and the area of the great circuits is cut up into small limits, usually only four appointments to each charge. In early times, the active local minister did annually almost as much preaching as the itinerant pastors do in the present day in Texas. In Texas' largest stations the membership is comparatively small, and demands of the pastor but limited pastoral work.

In the pioneer times, long and dangerous trips had to be taken to reach all the appointments of the circuits. Sometimes the lone preacher had, like Jacob of old, to pass the night upon the grassy bosom of the earth, while the night stars, as angel watchers, peeped down from the depths of their ether homes upon his dewy slumbers; but now a whited cottage may stand where those night dews baptized the slumbering preacher's lonely head. Now a hearty welcome meets him and leads him into the hospitality of a generous family. Changed truly is the scene! The wilderness and the solitary places are glad for them, and the desert, indeed, blooms as the rose. John Wesley DeVil-

biss planted many of the cuttings which now bloom in the desert.

Forty years ago John Wesley DeVilbiss preached the first Protestant sermon in San Antonio. Great mission cathedrals had been built there hundreds of years before, huge monuments of priestly zeal, but no Protestant minister had ever lifted up his voice within the limits of the great city of the West in favor of a free and higher form of religion. It was an era in the history of the city. An enterprising Protestant element gradually collected within her corporate limits, which helped to push on her car of progress.

DeVilbiss was the man for the place and the times. Full of faith and zeal, he went forward regarding no discouragements. With his own hands he made benches to seat the small audience that attended his preaching. We fancy we see him boring two auger holes near to each end of slabbed puncheons in which to insert legs to make benches to seat his people. Here was the beginning of Protestantism in San Antonio. Faith nerved the arm to do the work. Faith saw a better day. Without the brilliant looming up of that better day before the eye of faith, that work had not been undertaken. Jesus said of Abraham of old that he desired to see the day of Christ. He saw it, and was glad. Faith's prophetic eye saw it away down in the annals of the future. It beheld the events of fifteen hundred years lying unborn in the womb of time; and beyond their birth into history, it saw the day—the period of Christ's triumphant reign upon earth, all radiant with knowledge and glory, filling the earth as the waters cover the seas. Faith in the heart of that humble young Protestant preacher saw churches filled with better sittings, rising up within the city limits, within the term of a single generation, and so it is to day. God permitted his faithful servant to live to see much of the harvest of his work; yea, he lived to hear the Sabbath chime of Protestant bells peal out from tall steeples, mingling their inviting tones along the crowded streets

and narrow alleys of the sin-polluted city, calling children to the Sabbath school, and at church hours inviting citizens and strangers to these temples for worship. He, too, lived to see a like growth of Protestantism all over the great State, over which he had traveled in the roll of forty-two years. Just here we copy from the TEXAS CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE a little card from the pen of Rev. H. S. Thrall, D. D., his comrade and early missionary companion in the Republic, who still survives him and lives in the city. It will show the reader how the citizens of the city and State love to honor the name of the man who sowed the seed of Protestantism among them, and made the four-legged slab benches to seat his congregation. "In the new Paine church, Travis Park, San Antonio, there is in the front an unusually large opening for a window. Even before the death of our excellent Brother DeVilbiss it was the intention of the trustees and friends to place in this opening a beautiful memorial window, in memory of the first Protestant preacher who visited our city. Brother DeVilbiss was a member of the Texas Conference when it included the whole Lone Star Republic; and an appeal is now made to his old friends, in all parts of Texas, to contribute to this noble object." "I will honor those that honor me," saith the Lord. DeVilbiss lived to see that opening in the building, but not after its finishing. Before its completion he had passed through the "gate of Pearl," and had met Abraham of like faith. The last session of the West Texas Conference he ever attended, met in the basement of that unfinished church. But it is all finished now, and the house is dedicated to the worship of God; and that window is finished; a lovely memorial to his name and works among men, so long as the firm set building may resist the decay of the ages.

Truly was he honored and trusted by his brethren when in the field of active service. As Presiding Elder among

the Germans and Americans, as agent for the American Bible Society, and agent for Georgetown University, he was fully confided in, and when a superannuate he was chairman of the Conference Board of Missions, and president of the Board of Curators of Georgetown University. Several times, in the absence of a Bishop, he was elected to act as Bishop, *pro tem.* He was a man of sound judgment and strictly conscientious in all things. Well posted in all the doctrines and usages of his church, hence he was a safe man, worthy of being trusted and honored. He loved Methodism. To touch Methodism was to touch his heart.

CHAPTER XXI.

HIS SUPERANNUATION.

At the session of the West Texas Conference of 1881, the pallid features of John Wesley DeVilbiss admonished his brethren of the sad fact that disease was gradually wasting his hardy and active manhood. Though not a large man, being only of medium size; averaging, in health, we suppose, one hundred and fifty to one hundred and sixty pounds; fair complexion, light hair, and a broad face and forehead; built for hardships, and having led an active laboring life, he might have lived and labored actively in the ministry; fifteen or twenty years longer, for he passed away in his sixty-seventh year. But disease had settled upon some of life's vital organs, which increased in complication and force until life gave way. It was hoped that a year's rest in the superannuated sphere would return him to the effective roll. The Conference, though willing to grant him rest, regretted much to see their patriarch veteran retire from the pastoral field. But time comes with us all when all hopes must fail us. Disease did not allow him rest till he obtained it in the quiet of the grave. To no one was superannuation so appalling as to our afflicted brother, but he felt it to be a necessity for a hope of restoration. Only that could reconcile him to that retired relation. But in that retreat from itinerant toils he did not rest as worn and wearied nature required. So long accustomed to a life of rapid activities and so habituated to going and doing, quiet stillness was painful to him. Life with him was indeed a tissued body of activities—an excitement—a stirring flame; stillness was truly stagnation. Some natures enjoy rest and repose; indolent, idle ones, who seem to have been *born tired*, and have *never got rested*; to them it would be no cross, no trial, to fall back into inertness. Not so with the

ever moving DeVilbiss. It was a great cross, a severe trial, a penetrating temptation to him to remain in a non-pastoral sphere. He preached a sermon, frail as he was, a few weeks only before he went from us.

The superannuate has indeed reached the terminal point of an itinerant life; but how strange; how sad to him. He meditates: he looks to the past, when listening hundreds met to hear him tell the story of redeeming love. But now, no circuit; no charge. The quiet sabbath mornings unlock no church doors for him. No solemn sounding church bell invites him to an open pulpit, where he may speak to the attentive multitude of Him who died to save ruined men! No pastorate, no special charge. Others have: he has none. Oh, how these thoughts crowd in upon the early days of the superannuate. But above all, the gloomiest, the darkest thoughts that crowd in upon the meditations of most superannuates, is that they must end their lives in poverty's cloudy vale. No trade, no profession, no merchandise, no income; only a few prorated dollars of a small conference fund annually; and no ability to labor; no house, no lands nor herds; no flocks nor cash. How dark the lonely vale! Dark as it is, he must go into it, and pass through it while numbering out life's remnant of days. To him it is the only way to the "rest for the weary."

That which was most distasteful to our veteran hero was leaving the pastoral work. He was a thorough Methodist. He loved Methodism in her doctrines, usages and polity. He staked all earthly life and immortality upon Methodist Gospel. Thank God, though he was not rich in worldly goods, yet he had a home to which he could retire in his deep afflictions. When able he shunned no needed or useful labor to aid in the support of himself and those dependent upon him. He was a man of many works. In his closing days he did more than his wasted powers would justify. At the end of work he went to live with the angels.

THE LAST CONFERENCE HE ATTENDED.

It convened in San Antonio, October 29th, 1884, Bishop McTyeire, presiding.

Indulgent reader, let me lead you back to the Paine Travis Park Church, in San Antonio, Texas, where the last session of the West Texas Conference was convened. Seated in the large basement room, you will see nearly one hundred preachers, American and Mexican. See coming slowly down the isle an old man with pale features; all eyes are turned upon him as he approaches nearer the Bishop's chair. That is John Wesley DeVilbiss, the venerable patriarch of the Conference. Though much wasted and debilitated by disease, his voice is not shattered. He is still powerful in prayer. Listen! and you will hear his clear melodious voice ringing out over all the crowd, at the love feast on Sunday morning. Again you will hear heart thrilling shouts of glory. It is the mellow voice of our veteran father. He loved the love feast, and they were seasons of great refreshment to him. His last, his farewell address to the Conference was truly affecting. It was of few words, but to the point: "Brethren, I may not meet you any more. Be true to your work, and faithful to our common Methodism. God bless you!" As he passed down the isle toward the door, all tearful eyes were once more turned upon him, while silence, like the stillness of death, prevailed for a moment, when Dr. Kelley said, "God bless the old soldier!" He passed the door, and we saw him no more.

At the next session of the Conference in Gonzales, when the roll call is announced, and the secretary reaches in alphabetic order the fourth letter, calling the name of "J. W. DeVilbiss," tears will fall, and a sad gloom will muffle each heart, because he is not. No answer, no echo comes, repeating, "here!" Presently a solemn sound replies, "gone!" "dead!" A brief paragraph report sums up his life toils of

forty-three years. That is the end. Earth can only repeat what he did. Heaven only repay. There, all our hopes converge.

HIS TRIALS IN HIS LAST SUFFERINGS.

It was the peculiarly sensitive nature of our suffering brother that caused him to have to endure such painful trials. We have already seen what a trial confinement was to his active spirit. It indeed was a sore and painful thing to him to have to lie in bed, or sit about the house. He prayed much for grace to resign him to his lot. Impatience and want of resignation were the severest trials he was subjected to. At times the enemy assailed his faith. Not his faith in God and immortality, but his faith in God's personal love to him. He seemed to inject a doubt into his mind, that God's love had failed him, or otherwise he would not allow such sufferings to fall upon him; but a moment of prayer, and the tempter deserted him. It was not a new method of attack. He had tried others that way. We have stood over the encoffined dead, and read: "O Lord! suffer us not in our last hours, for any pains of death, to fall from Thee!" To distrust Thy love. In our young years that was mysterious to us, but in feeble age we understand it. Here the great enemy made some strong thrusts at the confiding trust of our departed brother, when torturing pain would begin to unloose life's tender fibres. He followed up the dying saint to the cold dew sprinkling shore of the Jordan. But, thank God! he can go no further. But God must be trusted, clung to, as the tendril of the vine clings to its trestle, till the strife is over. There victory begins.

> It is when heart and flesh shall fail,
> And mortal life shall cease,
> He passes within the veil
> To a life of joy and peace.

Our dear sainted brother in life loved to sing that immortal song, so full of comfort and so applicable to his

last sufferings, that we give it place in this book, which tells of his mortal anguish and of his peaceful rest. We can almost hear him repeat its stanzas in melodious song, as he used to sing it at our Conference sessions:

I.

"How firm a foundation, ye Saints of the Lord.
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
You who unto Jesus for refuge hath fled?

II.

"In every condition—in sickness, in health;
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth;
At home and abroad; on the land, on the sea—
As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be

III.

"Fear not; I am with thee; O, be not dismayed!
I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

IV.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

V.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all sufficient shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee—I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.

VI.

"Even down to old age, all my people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And when hoary hairs thy temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne.

VII.

"The soul that on Jesus doth lean for repose,
I will not, I will not, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never, forsake."

Those dear sweet promises stayed our beloved brother's soul upon Christ until it left its clay tenement to join the Church of the "first born" in heaven.

I also have four strong lectures upon Christian holiness, one on temperance, a number on various subjects, and an

essay on prayer, written for the committee of examination for the third year, dated 1843. It is excellent for a young man of the third year. It is the oldest document we have from his pen. Many of these manuscripts are of great age. The paper is much dinged by time, and some parts missing; so we decline their transcription. We thought the essay on Constantine was the senior, but, since writing that, we found the essay on prayer in 1843.

The lectures upon holiness are most excellent, embracing a statement from the Holy Scriptures of every doctrine related to the same. The pure state of man's creation, his fall, moral depravity, regeneration, and a growth in wisdom and purity to the end of life. He does not say that it is a "second blessing," but a growth, as the child matures into the man.

If any man in Texas possessed and enjoyed Christian holiness, John Wesley DeVilbiss must have been the man. He made no claim to it; made no boast of his attainments. But his life was the "tell-tale" of his heart. O his prayers, his shouts, his songs at our annual sessions! Can we cease to hear them? Ah! we, indeed, shall miss him in the host here; but the angels and the general assembly of "the church of the first born" shall hear his sweet anthems "Over there! Over there!"

CHAPTER XXII.

MEMORIALS.

By A. H. Sutherland, H. S. Thrall, John Pitezel, and A. F. Cox.

Our Ascended Elijahs.

A. F. COX.

The West Texas Conference is clad in the habiliments of mourning! Within a few days of each other, three of her most valuable and honored members have obeyed the last summons and taken their departure to the spirit land! Yes, it is true our beloved brethren and companions in tribulation, DeVilbiss, Seat and Fisher, have received from the Great Captain of our salvation their papers of discharge, and ascended into the heavens to be forever with the Lord! Tears, unbidden, like rain drops, flow from many eyes. Thousands to whom they ministered in holy things weep because the loved ones are not. No more shall their silver bugles call the hosts of Israel to go forth to glorious war! They have fought the good fight; they have kept the faith; they have finished their course with triumph, and now they have gone up to wear crowns of unfading glory! True we sorrow, but not like those who have no hope, for we believe that if Jesus died and rose again, even so them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. This is our consolation, "If they cannot return to us, we can go to them." Aye, through infinite riches of the grace of God, we hope to meet them and to greet them again, on that eternal shore, amid the songs and alleluias of an innumerable multitude of the redeemed, blood-washed children of God! Noblemen! Self-sacrificing and honored servants of the Divine Master; beloved fellow-laborers in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, *farewell!* but

not forever! We, too, are journeying to the land of Beulah, and ere long, after a few more days of toil and sorrow, we hope, by the grace of God, to behold the *delectable mountains*, and with you, and many others who have gone before, to walk, with nimble feet and buoyant spirits, the gold-paved streets of the New Jerusalem!

The Rev. John W. DeVilbiss was our zealous, active pioneer and patriarch. The Rev. O. A. Fisher was our model pastor and successful worker. The Rev. William H. Seat was our eagle orator, and withal, an humble, child-like, whole-souled Christian.

Rev. John Wesley DeVilbiss.

A. H. SUTHERLAND.

The Rev. John Wesley DeVilbiss has just been laid away to rest. He was the patriarch of the West Texas Conference and the man who preached the first Protestant sermon in San Antonio. He was in his sixty-seventh year, forty of which he completed in the itinerancy, and two or three in the superannuated relation. His life was one of singular purity, devotion and activity. A man of fair learning, but of most unusual common sense. His preaching was sound in doctrine, instructive in matter, very pleasing in style, and deeply edifying in its unction. In prayer he was perfection itself. In my life I have heard no one who so fully fed my soul in prayer.

But the weary wheels of life stand still at last. His voice will be no more heard amongst us; he will be no more seen. We do not yet realize our loss, but we all will when conference meets. Oh! what a vacuum there will be! Many tears will anticipate that solemn moment: then they will flow from every eye. Our father, our friend, our wise counsellor, gone—to return no more! We will have to do without Bro. DeVilbiss hereafter, brethren.

Nothing but his memory remains with us. But the perfume of that will fill the whole house, for the alabaster box is broken.

Brother Fisher gone, Brother DeVilbiss gone, and Dr. Mood gone (for he was ours, too), and now comes the sad news that one of my own trusted lieutenants lies at death's door. But the darkness and the tears are all on this side that door; beyond there are no tears, and all is light.

On the thirty-first ultimo, Brother DeVilbiss was repairing the back of the fire place at his home, and had moved his chair back to look at his work, when suddenly the messenger came, and he arose, but sinking down gently to the floor, without a groan or sigh—all was over. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."

Rev. John Wesley DeVilbiss.

BY H. S. THRALL.

Rev. John W. DeVilbiss was, I believe, a native of the State of Ohio, born in 1818. In his youth he learned the saddler's trade at Alexandria, Licking county. While an apprentice, he professed religion, mainly through the influence of a pious shopmate. For a time he was a student in the Methodist College at Augusta, Kentucky. My first acquaintance with him was at a camp-meeting near Parkersburg, West Virginia, in the summer of 1840. At the ensuing Ohio Conference we entered the itinerancy together, and two years later, after being ordained deacons, side by side, both received appointments as missionaries to the Republic of Texas. His first circuit was on the Colorado river, and included the scope of country from Fayette county to Matagorda, and the entire valleys of the Lavaca and Navidad rivers. Then for two years he was on the Gonzales circuit, which included all the country west of the Lavaca river. During this time he visited San Antonio,

and preached the first Protestant sermon in the city. He also organized a small class, and among others received into the Church Miss Kerr, to whom he was subsequently married, and who now mourns his loss.

During the years 1846 and 1847 he was stationed in San Antonio, and to supplement his meagre salary taught a small school. Then he was sent to LaGrange, on the Colorado, and subsequently for six years labored in Milam, Robertson and Burleson counties. In 1856 he was appointed presiding elder of the San Antonio German district, and for four years superintended the German missions in West Texas. Then for a series of years he was presiding elder in the American work on the San Antonio district.

1863, 1864 he spent in Goliad: and in 1865 was returned to the San Antonio district. Then for five years he was agent for the American Bible Society. Then for three years he was presiding elder on the Corpus Christi district. His next two years were spent on the Cibolo circuit; then for a number of years he traveled as agent of the Southwestern University. In 1876 and 1877 he traveled the Clinton circuit, which took him a long distance from his home. Then in 1878 and 1879 he was in charge of the Tenth Street congregation in San Antonio. This closed his fortieth year in the active ministry, and in feeble health he asked and obtained a superannuated relation.

For years he had, as occasion offered, followed surveying; and after his superannuation he continued in this work as long as he was able to follow a compass. He was said to be one of the best and most accurate surveyors in West Texas. He lived at his home near the Medina river, in Bexar county, where he died without a struggle or a groan, on the last day of January, 1885.

The world would hardly pronounce Brother DeVilbiss a great man, but he was more than that; he was a good man in every sense of the word. If his preaching could hardly be called eloquent, it was certainly effective, and his labors

were always acceptable and useful. He was a model pastor, and kept the business of the Church in prime order. The one who followed him found the Church register posted up all right, and the quarterly conference minutes in proper shape.

He represented West Texas in the General Conference of 1866, and was three times elected president, and as many times served as secretary. Few men attended to every item of business as carefully and as promptly as he did.

Rev. John W. De Vilbiss.

JOHN H. PITEZEL.

(In Texas Christian Advocate.)

Opening your excellent paper of the seventh instant, my eyes caught the above name with the announcement of his death on the morning of January 31. To my heart it sent a pang of sorrow as a personal bereavement. There are probably not more than four or five persons now living who knew this good brother when he was but five years of age. I am one of the few. From the spring of 1823 for four years we were play-mates. 1831-33 we slept in the same bed, and worked side by side at the same bench as saddlers. This was in Tiffin, Ohio. It was during the summer of 1833, I am quite sure, when I saw him powerfully converted at the Rocky Run camp-meeting, four miles from Tiffin. He was so happy that, following his first impulse, he went in pursuit of some of his youthful companions, but they fled, whereupon he exclaimed: "The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion." Wesley, as we always familiarly called him, being four years my junior, was then about fifteen. He left Tiffin soon after, and our paths became divergent. In the spring of 1835 I entered the traveling ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and joined the Ohio Annual Conference, The Mich-

igan Conference was organized at Mansfield, Ohio, September 7, 1836. Wesley was at Mansfield working at his trade, and here we met for the last time. By division I fell into the Michigan Conference, with which my connection has remained unbroken to this day. Wesley, in 1840, came into the Ohio Conference, and soon after, with several others, including our much lamented Daniel Roe and wife, went as a missionary into Texas, where you know his grand record.

I have thought a brief account of the early life of my old friend would not be unacceptable to you. Alexander DeVilbiss, Wesley's father, was a native of Frederick county, Maryland. His wife, Priscilla, was an own cousin to my mother. Mr. DeVilbiss was a class-leader and an exhorter in the Methodist Episcopal church, and led the class at Graceham, Maryland, to which my parents belonged. He moved to Ohio in advance of my father, and settled on a fine farm, in Licking county, Ohio. The village of Alexandria, named after him, is situated on a part of that farm. That part of Ohio was then so much of a wilderness that in Maryland it was spoken of as the back-woods.

In the spring of 1823 my father, Henry Pitezel, and family followed Mr. DeVilbiss within a few days of closing my ninth year. Until we could build on a farm adjoining, we lived under the roof of Mr. DeVilbiss, where we heard our first sermon in Ohio, the preacher being a young man who afterward made his mark—Rev. Arza Brown.

Wesley, as you know, wrote his name different from his father. He broke a cross which would have been as needless as it was hard to bear—rather, another broke it for him. I give the way it happened from an eye-witness and one who was a child with us in Ohio and one of Wesley's best friends, Samuel Park, now of Otumwa, Iowa. I quote from a letter written me February 8, 1882: "In the year 1839 I started for Augusta College, on the Ohio river, forty five miles above Cincinnati. Soon J. W. Devilbiss followed, and we roomed together and kept 'bach.'; were

in the same classes. When we first went into the recitation room of Prof. McCowen, he asked our names. Wesley told him his name. And you would have laughed to see the old Professor scowl and then grin at the name. 'What is the name?' said he, as if he did not understand. 'What a name! I will change the name and put the accent on the second syllable, and write it DeVilbiss.' And then and there he took the name, and Wesley so wrote it afterwards."

I received a letter from Wesley in 1836 and another in 1841. From that time I lost track of him—only knew he went to Texas. In 1872 I wrote to the editor of the TEXAS CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE and obtained his address. I wrote him and received a most excellent letter, epitomizing his personal and family history in Texas. It was dated December 17, 1872. In that he said: "I cannot express to you the joy your short epistle gave me. Your letter is the very first direct information I have ever received of you." He thus closed: "I love our blessed Savior and his great cause, and hope to die at my post. Write fully—write freely. I am, very truly and affectionately, your cousin and fellow-laborer in the gospel of Christ."

I wrote him at some length in return, but received no answer. For nearly twelve years the silence was unbroken. I looked up his address again and wrote him, and received from him such a letter as only he could write, dated March 24, 1884. I give you an extract or two: "I try to trust in God and His precious promises. Psalms xxxvii:3, 4, 5, 6, are a great comfort to me. I am trying to live at all times ready for my departure. Sometimes I am greatly blessed in my poor soul. Last Tuesday night, when I was so terribly racked with pain and convulsed with choking, as the paroxysm began to abate, God greatly blessed my soul. I was constrained to shout aloud the praises of God. I felt that Christ was mine in fullest and freest communion."

He thus closed: "Well, I have written you a long letter and must close. My wife says I will have a bad spell to-night. I hope not. I have written this propped up in a rocking chair, my swollen feet on a stool, and a board to write on in my lap. Love to you and Carrie (my daughter). Farewell, my dear old cousin and brother; we will meet in heaven. *O heaven! Sweet heaven!*"

This letter deeply affected me, as I feared I should never hear from him again. But I had four letters afterward, the last dated October 16, 1884.

I anticipated much pleasure from his reminiscences in the ADVOCATE. Five numbers came and then a long and ominous silence led me to fear the worst—which now ha scome. I shall look with intense interest for particulars respecting his death. While earth is poorer, heaven is richer for this added star.

I knew my departed friend as a child and a bright and promising youth. But his after record of forty years' effective service in the ministry; your estimate of him as the "first Protestant preacher in San Antonio, and the gospel pioneer throughout all this Western Conference; the patriarch of our Conference;" is one you cannot afford to let die. May God bless his dear family and friends.

THREE RIVERS, Mich., Feb. 10, 1885.

Memorial Services.

H. S. THRALL.

Within three months after the last session of the West Texas Conference in San Antonio, four of the leading preachers of Texas had passed away; three of whom, Brothers O. A. Fisher, W. H. Seat and J. W. DeVilbiss, had, as pastor and presiding elders, been connected with our Church in San Antonio. The fourth, Dr. F. A. Mood, had attended our conference, and was engaged in a work in

which we were all deeply interested. Under these circumstances, it was deemed proper to hold memorial services in the Paine Church, Travis Park, in this city. This service was accordingly held in the church on Sunday night, February 8. Addresses were made by the pastor, E. B. Chappell, by David Coulson, who, in 1836, in Illinois, held the camp-meeting at which the late Brother Fisher, and his brother James, who died in Houston with yellow fever, and his two sisters, were converted and received into the Church; and also by the writer, who had been very intimately associated with all four of the deceased brethren. A large audience assembled to participate in the services: the choir had selected suitable hymns for the solemn occasion, and upon the whole, I think, a good impression was made while paying an appropriate tribute to the memory of these great and good men.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HIS LAST END AND RELEASE FROM PAIN.

At the last session of the West Texas Conference held in San Antonio in November, 1884, he was present, in great feebleness, and took a part in the business of the Conference, for the last time. Though evidently often in much pain, he was happy. His brethren were impressed with the possibility that it was the last session at which they should meet him; and when he made to them his farewell address, all eyes wept tears of love and regret, as he was gently led slowly down the isle to pass out to be seen by them no more. Silence reigned for a time as all looked upon him, and Bishop McTyiere, presiding, said with much emphasis, "God bless the old man!" We saw him no more. From the living, his saintly form is hidden till that far off morn when the dead shall live again!

For more than two years he was a sufferer. Some times he was greatly afflicted, but when not so severely chastised with pain, he was up and doing something to help meet the demands for a support for himself and his dependent ones, as the prorated pittance the Conference funds furnished him did not meet his absolute wants. He was no shirker. He was a handy man, ready to aid in anything needful to help himself and to assist others. When he felt measurably relieved from pain he would overdo his strength, and then he would have a spell of suffering. Such was the industrious temperament of the man, and such had been the active habits of his life, that it was hard for him to rest in quiet. He could not be unemployed. Idleness was not in his vocabulary of life. He could not be triflingly engaged at anything; it must be something of profit that engaged his time and energies; and not to be able to be employed at some beneficial enterprise made him restive, and he often

prayed for a spirit of patience and resignation to the allotments of a kind Providence.

He loved the Church for whose prosperity he had spent all the prime energies of a long life, and when obliged to labor in pain to gain means to provide for temporal things, we never hear him murmur on account of her little provisions made for her helpless servants, but in his diary he blames his own financiering for his want of means, his earlier want of appreciation of the value of money. His time and labor had been given to advance measures looking to the good of the church, and often more liberal in contributions than his means should have allowed. All that he thought lay in the line of duty, yet he puts all the cause of his wants upon himself, and not upon the church, where the blame, if any, should all rest, for not making ample provisions for her disabled ones, who spend their time and manhood to discharge the duties she demands at their hands. Indeed, he loved the church, and he often sang in the pulpit:

"I love Thy Church, O God!
Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,
And graven on Thy hand."

The writer finds his journals covering a term of thirty years, and for twenty years those journals contain a daily record of the prominent events of his life. From these records of the last days of his stay in the body we read of the stage of his disease, and the temper of his spirit; and of the needful jobs of work he occasionally performed; even that of assisting his wife and daughter in hauling a load of wood, etc., etc. His last job was the repairing of the back of his own chimney. As soon as it was finished he went away, in a moment, to that land where neither heat nor cold can harm him; where

"Everlasting spring abides
And never withering flowers!"

He had felt better for several days and had visited San

Antonio the day before, a distance of twelve miles—going and returning the same day, making a trip of twenty-four miles in one day; and the mending of the chimney the next morning was more than his debilitated state could bear.

The swelling of his feet would indicate his last disease to have been dropsical; and the excessive accumulation of fluids about his heart must have prevented its action in a moment, and he left the untenable mansion lifeless and still, upon the floor, just where he had stepped back to see how his newly finished job would appear. In an instant he ceased to work and ceased to live. There lies the pale, motionless body, but DeVilbiss is not there.

He had suffered more than two years the ravages of disease, and it was truly gracious that he should now pass away without the pain, the mortal struggle of dying. The anguish of the dying strife he did not feel. For that event he was ready. Preparations for that returnless journey he had made, and the messenger for the departure was looked for even daily. He was not taken by a surprise. The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof were there; and the angel charrioteers held the reins to drive safely along the way to immortality. Robed in a bright vestment of glory he is seated beside him, and now upward they mount, excelling the speed of the radiant comet, cleaving the blue ethereal ocean, until the Celestial City is in view; when it is seen that many immortals are waiting and watching at the beautiful gate for his coming, and the glad acclaim of welcome is heard from the sweet voices attuned to notes of melody. Welcome! all hail! Welcome ye faithful, ye redeemed son of sorrow! Come into these sinless realms!

> "Their ensigns were waving,
> And their banners unfurled,
> O'er jasper walls and gates of pearl,
> That are seen in that sun-bright clime."

In that throng of glorified immortals were many friends and brethren; many spiritual children, who had finished life's toilsome journey before him. He was not a stranger

there. Ruter, Alexander, Stricklin, and other pioneers in Texas, greeted and bade him feel at home with them in Paradise. O blessed heaven! Who hath not a friend in heaven, waiting and watching for their coming? But far, far away, is that sun bright clime. There are flowers of beauty strange and fair, and a thousand wings hover o'er the dazzling wave and the golden shore. Who meet on that eternal shore shall never be parted more. DeVilbiss is now there, and brethren of the same conference are with him—Garrett, Seat, Fisher, and Cook—who left us in one twelve-month. A stranger there? No, indeed, a numberless multitude from the sunny land of Texas have crossed the Jordan in the forty years of his life upon her shores. They are there to recount their trials and triumphs in the earth. O how we miss them here! But our loss is their gain; then, adieu, dear brethren, until me meet you over there, and press the immortal hand! You have trodden life's rough paths by our sides, and have passed through death's chilly wave before us. With them the battles of life are ended: the victory is theirs. They have possession of the land of promise; and their titles hold forever. Our dear departed friend has no use for earthly lands, or compass, now. No toiling under pains and fatigue to earn the stay and staff of life. He is raised to an immortal state of honor and glory, having entered into the joy of his Lord. O could we see him in his glory, we could not wish him here in mortal clay. When John met one of his fellow-servants, a prophet, upon the isle of Patmos, he fell down to worship him, but the prophet lifted him up, saying, I am thy fellow. Radiant, indeed, is his robe of glory.

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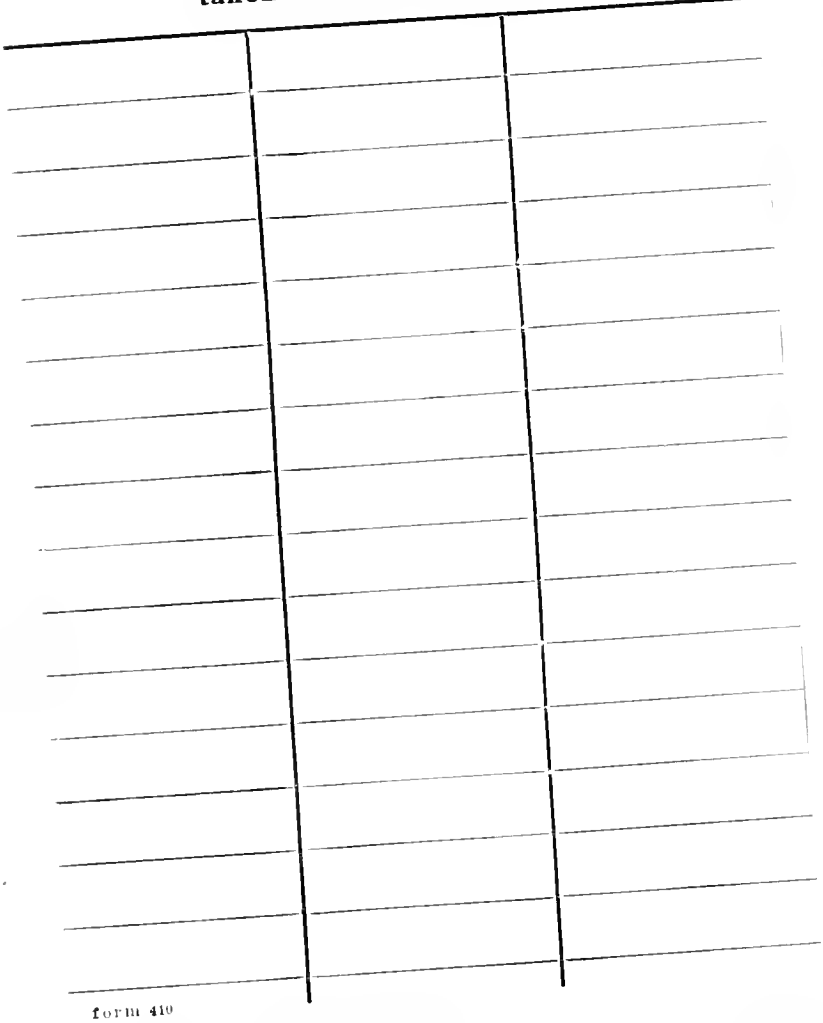

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